A·WONDER·BOOK OF·BEASTS

EDITED·BY·F·J·HARVEY·DARTON
ILLUSTRATED·BY·MARGARET·CLAYTON

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A Wonder Book
of
Beasts

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These beasts look rather odd to you,
A-dining in this shady nook.
Read on, each page will give the clue,
Of Beasts this is the Wonder-Book!

A·WONDER·BOOK·OF BEASTS·EDITED·BY F·J·HARVEY·DARTON WITH·ILLUSTRATIONS BY·MARGARET·CLAYTON

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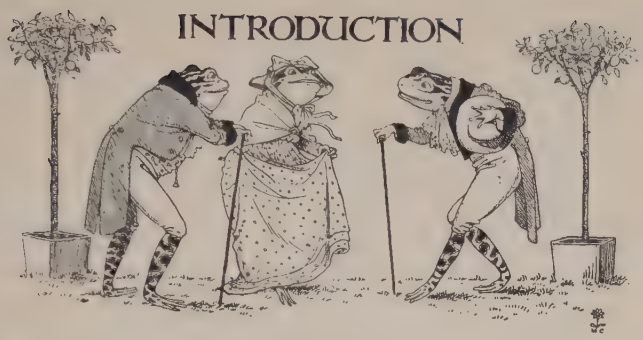
INTRODUCTION



THE twenty-seven stories in this book are all concerned with animals, but they are not, except incidentally in two or three cases, concerned with natural history. Unnatural history, indeed, would be the proper scientific name for them if all that we know about such creatures as the Fox and the Hen (to take the two who appear here most often) were the observed facts of their daily life. But we know more than that. Man has always been inclined to read more into the characters of animals than the observed facts really allow. It is clear that the Fox, for instance, is a crafty and resourceful animal, seldom at a loss, and, until he is hunted to death, well able to take care of himself in every emergency ; but Man has gone beyond the evidence, and given the Fox a crafty mind which foresees and plans and schemes on a scale really possible to no animal. He has made the Fox the type of successful cunning. In the like manner he has made the fussy, excitable Hen the type of fatuous dignity and foolish self-importance. Almost every animal has had its character extended in this way, until the world of Beasts is but a distorting mirror of the world of Men.

These stories, then, show Beasts acting as Men would act if they were Beasts. But they go further. They take us to a time and a realm into which happily neither science nor

history can enter—the age and the kingdom of wonder, where the Fox may be the guest of the Squire, where the Mouse may ask and be given bread by the Baker, where the loyal Sparrow can prevail against the harsh Waggoner. All ranks of creation are members of the same fantastic society. The Lion may be King, but his kingdom includes the Grasshopper as well as the Panther. Man may build houses, but so may a little Pig. The Hen, like any querulous invalid, needs her particular medicine; she rides in a coach, like any proud lady; the very stones and wood speak and act in the manner of a kindly human benefactor to her. The wisdom of the Frog wins him a Princess for a bride; the testy Rabbit has to be content with a Peasant-Girl—and she, with a human trait for once, declines to live in a hutch. A Sheep and a Robber meet on almost equal terms, and the Robber is not the victor. The Mouse, the Bird, and the Sausage live under a social contract, and break it in the usual human way.

The inhabitants of this attractive world have distinct and strong characters. The two most notable are those already mentioned—the Fox and the Hen. The Fox, from the days of Æsop, has had the same traditional character. There is no shift he is not put to, no trick he cannot play successfully. The noose may be almost round his neck, and he will still escape, and regain high favour. He is a liar, a thief, and a murderer. He is the enemy of all other Beasts; only the homely Badger and the equally crafty Ape befriend him consistently. There is a certain truth to nature in his escapades. His doublings and subterfuges in the hunting-field are proved by countless instances, and he certainly gives the impression of thoughtful guile. His relations with the Badger, moreover, have some basis of fact in real life. But no Fox ever had so many triumphs as Reynard, no earth was ever so well stored and well guarded as his castle of Malepardus. And for all his vileness, it is impossible not to like his humour, his skill, his perfect use of means to ends.

Into the origin of the great Beast-epic of "Reynard the Fox" this is not the place to inquire. The version here given

is adapted from the "rude and simple English" of Caxton's noble translation. The story itself is almost an encyclopædia of fable; in no other tale of the kind is there such a variety and breadth of incident, or so fine a range of characters. The sequel, "The Fox's Son," is very freely adapted from an eighteenth-century text. The other tales in which a Fox appears reveal him in his well-known capacity of poultry-stealer. In "Wise Cockscomb" (taken from a delightful old magazine called *The Charm*) he very rightly puts an end to the conceit of a vain young Cockerel. In "Chicken-Licken" (a primeval piece of folklore, told in a primeval way, taken from Chambers's collection) he is less just. He betrays the trust of a number of foolish but innocent domestic birds in a scandalous manner.

And that brings us to the Cock, the Hen, and the Duck. No one who has watched even for five minutes the affairs of a farmyard can fail to be struck by the value of these fowls for moral or amusing purposes. The Cock has been perfectly described by Chaucer, and the best tale about him is already included in another book in this series. But there is plenty still to be said concerning him. "Wise Cockscomb" shows the empty, frivolous side of his character. In "The Adventures of Chanticleer and Partlet" (from the inexhaustible Brothers Grimm) he is the kindly and thoughtful husband, the tyrant of Ducks, the inconsolable widower. Unlike Chaucer's Chanticleer, he seems to be the husband of only one wife. That he should die of grief at her loss is, perhaps, false to Nature; that he should look after her well in life may be seen to be true in any hen-run. In "Cock-alu and Hen-alie" (a version by Mary Howitt of an old story) he displays the inherent foolishness of almost all domestic fowls. Their character, it must be admitted, is unstable. Their attention is easily diverted; they are plainly great gossips; and Chanticleer could never do a good or notable deed without advertising it. Here, again, the society of the farmyard seems to be truthfully described. The character of the brown Hen, the homely little creature with the kind heart

and the practical brain, is, however, rather coloured by the human desire for a moral. The plainness of one's coat does not always, if one is a Hen, indicate goodness and good sense underneath the coat. But the Hen generally is certainly a good creature; in her motherly aspect she is often nearly perfect. On the other hand, she is apt to be even more unreliable than her lord the Cock. The astonishing news about the falling sky which Chicken-Licken (very properly, if the news had been true) desired to tell the King would not have been accepted by a Cock of sense and dignity; he would have been too proud to be seriously alarmed by the mere falling of an acorn upon his comb. Chicken-Licken had not attained the ease and calm of the elderly Partlet; she still had the ordinary Hen's impulse to scurry and be fluttered by any sudden trifle.

It could be wished that the Duck, the most satisfactory of farmyard fowls, appeared more largely in these tales. She carries to an almost sublime height the fussiness of the Hen, without any of the Hen's abruptness and hurry. Her quack is infinitely more moving than a mere "tuck-tuck-aw" or "cock-a-doodle-do." Her middle-class pomp is excellently described in "In the Duckyard," in which Hans Andersen, in his charming way, mixes a certain amount of human satire with a shrewd study of Duck character. There is something very real, too, in the way in which the enslaved Duck obligingly laid an egg for Chanticleer to offer the landlord. Even a landlord would yield to the bribe of a Duck's egg.

The other Bird-folk are less minutely described. The Tomtit, by the aid of the Hornet, defeated the Bear and his hosts. The Gosling has a blunt, bluff air, which suits him well in his intercourse with the Moorhen, who is represented as in spirit the lively, alert little creature which her outward form suggests. The seven little Goslings who were saved from the Wolf showed no great difference from any other Bird, though the one who hid in the clock was more acute than we usually think the grown-up Goose. Corbant the Rook has a certain amount of character (not very good

character) in "Reynard the Fox." And, finally, a Dove is clearly the disguise a beautiful young girl ought to take under the influence of magic. "The Forest Mill" (also from *The Charm*) is the only story, by the way, in which this magic change of form appears. The animal side of such tales, and not the magic side, is the aim of this book. In "The Forest Mill" the animals are thought to be animals, and act as animals, until the very last moment. In better-known stories, like "The White Cat," they are clearly something more than animals, and such stories, therefore, do not fall within the scope of this "Wonder Book."

To get away from the farmyard, consider the Dog. The Dog, the most intimate friend of Man, has fared ill at the hands of story-tellers. They always make him more or less real; he seems to inspire no fancy. He is too well known for any wonder to be left in him. The Sheep-dog whom the Sparrow avenged was sad and helpless when his occupation was gone, just as any lonely Sheep-dog really would be, and no more. The Mastiffs whom Reynardine slew were nothing but Mastiffs. Even Curtis, the little Hound, is only an attractive Lap-dog. It needs a contrast to make the Dog a figure of lively fancy. His ancient enemy, the Cat, gives him the touch of wonder. He becomes frenzied at her disregard of him; he is more than a cur, snapping and barking and growling—he is the type of impulsive, spontaneous hatred, powerless before the cold efficiency of the highly developed Cat. The Cat has often been praised, often blamed. Her character is justly (though not always truthfully) summed up in Miss O'Keeffe's famous lines:

> "The Dog will come when it is called,
> The Cat will walk away."

You may pet her and call her Pussy, and she will graciously recognise your attentions; but she will always walk by herself, as in Mr. Kipling's pointed story. She may make friendships with a Mouse (as in "All-Gone"), but she will certainly eat her friend in the end. The partnership was no longer useful: the Cat was hungry—what else could she do? What

else could any thinking machine do ? The story-tellers have neglected the Cat's beauty, grace, and insinuating manners (except in magical adventures like those of " The White Cat "), but they have done cruel justice to her remarkable power of getting exactly what she wants, and neither more nor less. The Cat asleep on a wall two inches above the highest possible leap of a frantic Dog is typical of their relations, and it is just that irritating efficiency which " The Cat that could not be Killed " illustrates. " Reynard the Fox " and " The Fox's Son " seem to err in making Tybert the Cat fall into traps so easily. Even greed seldom makes a Cat forget what she owes to herself in self-respect and caution.

The story of " The Cat that Could Not be Killed," by the way, carries with it an unpaid debt of thanks. It appeared in a delightful book of Indian Fairy-Tales, which has long been out of print. The owner of the copyright (not, the publishers state, the author of the book) has been dead a score of years, and all efforts to trace the actual present owner have failed. In the circumstances, the tale is used with every apology if any still-existing rights have been infringed. And here I may thank Miss Frere for a permission which was obtained, and which confers upon this book the tales of " Singh Rajah and the Cunning Little Jackals " and " The Jackal and the Alligator."

To return to the Beasts. The Cat leads direct to the Mouse. The oppressed race of Mice figures in much the same way in most of its appearances. By courage it saved itself from voluntary slavery to the Cat. On another occasion, already mentioned, Nature took her usual course. Once, by means of a succession of tasks performed in a primitive manner (in " The Cat and the Mouse "), a Mouse was able to recover her severed tail. What she did with it does not appear. In three other stories Mice perform actions out of all keeping with what we know of their habits. In one, " The Battle of the Frogs and Mice," they had routed, but for the coming of Crabs by supernatural means, the whole race of Frogs. Homer (or whoever wrote the " Batrachomyomachia ")

tells the story in the epic manner, a little parody of greater things. In a second—"Soup on a Sausage-Peg"—Hans Andersen allowed again romance and gentle satire to be expressed—in terms of Mice. Their adventures were large and heroic. And in the third story a Mouse and a Sausage dwelt together in unity. These be wonders indeed!

The Pig, also, rises above his station. It is known that he shows sometimes a stubborn cunning, especially when his views do not coincide with those of the authorities. But the conduct of the third of "The Three Little Pigs" is, as Calpurnia said, "beyond all use." Attractive as a Pigling is, there is nothing in Nature to warrant his triumph over the Wolf. The Wolf himself, on the other hand, both in this instance and in the matters of "Reynard and the Seven Little Goslings," lives up to the unpleasant little that we know of his real character. The Jackal, his cousin, is given a more desirable appearance than travellers usually admit. His victories over the Lion and the Alligator, however, are, so to speak, moral. They are the victories of the weak over the strong, rather than of the Jackal, as a Jackal, over his natural foes. The Bear, whether he is Reynard's kind, stupid, abused friend, or one of the famous three who lived in a house and ate porridge and slept in beds, or the simple soul who found young Tomtits repugnant, shows a nature which goes well with his rough, comfortable, furry exterior. The Sheep (in "The White Pet," a variant of the well-known Grimm tale, "The Bremen Town Musicians") is unexpectedly heroic. The Rabbit is usually a sort of four-footed counterpart of the Hen. The Squirrel is not greatly idealised. Curiously enough, as these words were written a confirmation of the Grey Squirrel's adventure (in "The Squirrel's Dream") appeared in real life. A correspondent of *The Spectator* (October 9, 1909) recorded an instance of a Squirrel crossing a river in the same way as Chirivolo.

So, with this feat of the Squirrel, romance brings us to real life, and we come from the wonders of story to the wonders of Nature. What scientists have not learned, the childhood of the world (for many of these tales are in essence almost as

old as mankind) has invented for us, weaving stories that may, in a sense, be truer than the truth itself. Few animals resist the touch of a child. They will suffer at the hands of a little creature who does not know their power what they would resent instantly in a man. There is something in that fact which suggests a deeper, more subtle kinship between us and what used to be called "the brute creation" than ever science could prove. We are not so far distant from the brutes that we can only put them into museums. Wonders are seen by the simple-hearted, not by the learned. If our forefathers could believe in Beasts that talked, that lived in a mimic society, that went about daily business as we do, must their belief be only a fable? The truth of a fable lies in its spirit. If we imagine a Fox as a quack-doctor, we really imagine in a pictorial way the credulity of mankind and the cleverness of the Fox. The old rhyme is not wholly fanciful:

> "Once upon a time, when Pigs spoke rhyme,
> And Monkeys chewed tobacco,
> And Hens took snuff to make them tough,
> And Ducks went quack, quack, quacko. . . ."

In it is to be found the whole history of Man's dealings with animals. Every line has its historical moral. The fossil-stones of the earth bear witness that the Beasts and their betters have lived in some sort of fellowship through ages that go even further back than "once upon a time." The mystical speech of the Pig and the curious habit of the Ape are emblems of the wonder we have felt, and at the same time the knowledge we have pretended, in regard to animals. The malicious plot of the Hen to defeat our greed is part of an eternal war of appetite. And to this day, as a plain fact, the admirable Duck still goes "quack, quack, quacko." All these tales belong to the "once upon a time" to which even the most serious of us would often wish to return, and all of them, if we have ears to hear, can lead us straight from "once upon a time" into the things of to-day. But for that short journey we must know how to believe in wonders.

F. J. HARVEY DARTON.

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A Wonder Book of Beasts

COCK-ALU & HEN-ALIE

COCK-ALU and Hen-alie sat on the perch above the bean-straw. It was four o'clock in the morning, and Cock-alu clapped his wings and crowed; then, turning to Hen-alie, he said: "Hen-alie, my little wife, I love you better than all the world; you know I do. I always told you so! I will do anything for you; I'll go round the world for you; I'll travel as far as the sun for you! You know I would! Tell me, what shall I do for you?"

"Crow!" said Hen-alie.

"Oh, that is such a little thing!" said Cock-alu, and crowed with all his might. He crowed so loud that he woke the farmer's wife, and the dog and the cat, and all

the pigeons and horses in the stable, and the cow in the stall. He crowed so loud that all the neighbours' cocks heard him and answered him, and they woke all their people ; and thus Cock-alu woke the whole parish.

" I've done it rarely this morning !" said Cock-alu ; " I told you I would do anything to please you !"

The next morning, at breakfast, as Hen-alie was picking beans out of the bean-straw, one stuck in her throat, and she was soon so ill that she was almost ready to die.

" Oh, Cock-alu," said she, calling to him in the yard, where he stood clapping his wings in the sunshine, " run and fetch me a drop of water from the silver-spring in the Beech-wood ! Fetch me a drop quickly, while the dew is in it ; for that is the true remedy."

But Cock-alu was so busy crowing against a neighbour that he took no notice.

" Oh, Cock-alu, do run and fetch me the water from the silver-spring, or I shall die ; for the bean sticks in my throat, and nothing but water with dew in it can cure me ! Oh, Cock-alu dear, run quickly !"

Cock-alu heard her this time, and set off, crowing as he went. He had not gone far before he met the snail.

" Where are you going, snail ?" says he.

" I'm going to the cow-cabbage," says the snail ; " and what urgent business may it be that takes you out thus early, Cock-alu ?" says the snail.

" I'm going to the silver-spring in the Beech-wood, to fetch a drop of water for my wife Hen-alie, who has got a bean in her throat," says Cock-alu.

" Oh," says the snail, " run along quickly, and get the water while the dew is in it ; for nothing else will get a bean out of the throat. Don't stop by the way, for the bull is coming down to the silver-spring to drink, and he

will trouble the water. Gather up my silver-trail, however, and give it to Hen-alie with my love, and I hope she'll soon be better!"

Cock-alu hastily gathered up the silver-trail which the snail left. "This will make Hen-alie a pair of stockings!" said he, and went on his way.

He had not gone far before he met the wood-pigeon. "Good morning, pigeon," says he; "and which way are you going?"

"I am going to the pea-field," says the pigeon, "to get peas for my young ones; and what may your business be this morning, Cock-alu?"

"I'm going to the silver-spring in the Beech-wood, to fetch a drop of water for my wife Hen-alie, who has got a bean in her throat."

"I'm sorry to hear that," says the pigeon; "but don't let me detain you, for water with the dew in it is the best thing to get a bean out of the throat; and let me advise you to make haste, for the bloodhound is going to lap at the spring, and he will trouble the water. So run along, and here, take with you my blue velvet neck-ribbon, and give it to Hen-alie with my love, and I hope she'll soon be better."

"Oh, what a nice pair of garters this will make for Hen-alie!" exclaimed Cock-alu, and went on his way.

He had not gone far before he met the wild-cat. "Good morning, friend," says Cock-alu; "and where may you be going to this morning?"

"I'm going to get a young wood-pigeon for my breakfast, while the mother is gone to the pea-field," says the wild-cat; "and where may you be travelling to this morning, Cock-alu?"

"I'm going to the silver-spring in the Beech-wood,"

replied Cock-alu, "to get a drop of water for my little wife Hen-alie, who has got a bean in her throat."

"That's a bad business," says the wild-cat, "but a drop of water with the dew in it is the right remedy; so don't let me keep you; and you had better make haste, for the woodman is on his way to fell a tree by the spring, and if a branch falls into it, the water will be troubled; so off with you! but carry with you a flash of green fire from my right eye, and give it to Hen-alie with my love, and I hope she'll soon be better."

"Oh, what beautiful green light, like the green on my best tail-feathers! I'll keep it for myself; it's fitter for me than for Hen-alie!" said Cock-alu.

So he hung the green light on his tail-feathers, which made them very handsome, and he went on his way.

He had not gone far before he met with the sheep-dog. "Good morning, sheep-dog," says Cock-alu; "where are you going?"

"I'm going to hunt up a stray lamb for my master," says the sheep-dog; "and what brings you abroad?"

"I'm going to the silver-spring in the Beech-wood, to get a drop of water for my little wife Hen-alie, who has got a bean in her throat," says Cock-alu.

"Then why do you stop talking to me?" says the sheep-dog, in his short way. "Your wife's bad enough, I'll warrant me, and a drop of water with the dew in it is the thing to do her good. Be off with you! The farmer is coming to lay the spring dry this morning; I left him sharpening his mattock when I set out. You'll be too late, if you don't mind!" And with that the sheep-dog went his way.

"An unmannerly fellow!" says Cock-alu, and stood looking after him. "I'll not go at his bidding, not I!"

So he clapped his wings and crowed in the wood, just to show that he set light by the dog's advice. "And never to give me anything for poor little Hen-alie, that lies sick at home with a bean in her throat! the ill-natured churl!" cried Cock-alu to himself, and then he stood and crowed again with all his might.

After that he marched on, and before long reached the Beech-wood, but as the silver-spring lay yet a good way off, he had not gone far in the wood before he met the squirrel.

"Good morning, squirrel," says he; "what brings you abroad so early?"

"Early, do you call it, Cock-alu?" says the squirrel. "Why, I've been up these four hours. I just stopped to give the young ones their breakfasts, and then set off to the silver-spring for a drop of water while the dew was in it for my poor old husband, who lies sick a-bed. I'm now on my way back again, for there is nothing like water with dew in it; I've got it here in a cherry-leaf. And, pray you, what business may take you abroad, Cock-alu?"

"The same as yours," replied Cock-alu. "I'm going for water, too, for my wife Hen-alie, who has got a bean in her throat."

"Ah, well-a-day," says the squirrel, "that's a bad thing! But run along with you, for the old sow is coming down with her nine little pigs, and if they trouble the water it will be all too late for poor little Hen-alie!"

And with that the squirrel leapt up into the oak-tree above where Cock-alu stood, for that was her way home, and left him without further ceremony.

"Humph!" said Cock-alu; "she might have given me

some of the water out of her cherry-leaf for my poor little Hen-alie!" And so saying he walked on through the Beech-wood, and as he met no more creatures he soon reached the silver-spring.

But it was now noon-day, and there was not a drop of dew in the water, and the bull had been down and drunk, and the bloodhound had lapped, and the old sow and her nine little pigs had wallowed in it, so the water was troubled; and besides that the woodman had felled the tree, which now lay across the spring, and the farmer was digging the new watercourse, so the spring was getting lower every minute. Cock-alu had come quite too late; there was not a drop left for poor little Hen-alie.

When Cock-alu saw this he was very much disconcerted; he did not know what to do. He stood a little while considering, and then he set off as hard as he could go to the squirrel's house to beg a drop of water from her. But the squirrel lived a long way off in the wood, and thus it was a considerable time before he got there.

When he reached the squirrel's house, however, nobody was at home. He knocked and knocked for a long time, and at last he walked in, but they were all gone out. He peeped, therefore, into the pantry to see if he could find the water. There was plenty of hazel-nuts and beech-nuts—heaps and heaps of them, all laid up in store for winter—but no water. At length he saw the curled-up cherry-leaf, like a water-jug, standing at the squirrel's bed-side; but it was empty; there was not a single drop in it.

"This is a bad business!" said Cock-alu to himself, and turned to leave the house. At the squirrel's door he met the woodpecker.

"Woodpecker," says he, "where is the squirrel gone to? I want to beg a drop of water from the silver-spring

for my wife Hen-alie, who has got a bean in her throat!"

"Lack-a-day!" said the woodpecker, "the old squirrel drank every drop, and drained the jug into the bargain. He lay sick in bed this morning, but there was such virtue in the water that he got well as soon as he drank it, and now he has taken his wife and the little ones out for an airing. They will not be back till night, I know. But if you will leave any message with me I will be sure and deliver it, for the squirrel and I are very neighbourly."

"Oh!" groaned Cock-alu; "but what would be the use of leaving a message if they have no water to give me?"

With that he came down from the old pine-tree where the squirrel lived, set out on his way home again, and came at length out of the Beech-wood; but it was then getting towards evening.

He came to his own yard. There was the perch on which he and Hen-alie had so often sat, and there was the bean-straw, and there lay poor Hen-alie just as he had left her.

"Hen-alie, my little wife," said he, crowing loudly as he came up, that he might put a cheerful face on the matter, "I have been very unlucky. I could not get you any water, but I have got something so nice for you! I have brought you a pair of silver-gauze stockings, which the snail has sent you, and a pair of blue velvet garters to wear with them, which the ring-dove gave me!"

"Thank you," said poor little Hen-alie in a very weak voice, "but I wish you could have brought me some water. These things will do me no good!"

"I could not bring you water, for the silver-spring is dry," said Cock-alu, feeling very unhappy, and yet

wishing to excuse himself. "There's not a drop of water left in it!"

"Then it's all over with me!" sighed poor little Hen-alie.

"Don't be down-hearted, my little wife!" said Cock-alu, trying to seem cheerful. "I will give you something better than all. I will give you the green-fire flash from the wild-cat's right eye, which he gave me to wear on my tail-feathers. Look up, my poor little Hen-alie, and I'll give it all to you!"

"Alas!" sighed poor little Hen-alie, "what good will they do me? Oh, that somebody only loved me well enough to have brought me one drop of silver-spring water!"

All this while something very nice was happening.

There was in the poultry-yard a shabby little drab-coloured hen, very small, and very much despised. Cock-alu would not look at her, nor Hen-alie either. She had no tail-feathers at all, and long legs which looked as if she had borrowed them from a hen twice her size: she was, in short, the meanest-looking, most ill-conditioned hen in the yard.

All the time, however, that Cock-alu was out on his fruitless errand she had been comforting Hen-alie in the best way she could, and assuring her that Cock-alu would soon be back again with the water from the silver-spring. But when he came back without a single drop, and only offered the fine silk stockings and blue velvet garters instead, she set off, without saying a word, as fast as her long black legs would carry her, out of the wood and down to the silver-spring, which she reached in a wonderfully short time.

Fortunately the silver-spring had flowed into its new channel as clearly as ever, and the evening dew had

dropped its virtues into it. The owls were shouting "Kla-vit!" from one end of the wood to the other. The dark leathern-winged bats and the dusky white and buff-coloured moths were flitting about the broad shadows of the trees, but the little hen took no notice of any of them. On she went, thinking of nothing but that which she had to do; and, reaching the silver-spring, she gathered up twelve drops of water, and, hurrying back again, came into the yard just as poor Hen-alie was saying: "Oh,

"'*One drop of silver-spring water!*'"

that somebody had loved me well enough to fetch me only one drop of silver-spring water!"

"That I do!" said the shabby little hen, and dropped one drop after another into her beak.

The first drop loosened the bean, the second softened it, and the third sent it down her throat.

Hen-alie was well again. Cock-alu was ready to clap his wings and crow for joy, and the little hen turned quietly away to her solitary perch.

"Nay," said Hen-alie, "but you shall not go unrewarded. See, here is a pair of silk stockings for you, and here is green fire, which will make the most beautiful feathers in the world grow all over your body! Take them all, you good little thing, and to-morrow morning you will come out the handsomest hen in the yard!"

So it was. There must have been magic in those silk stockings and that green fire, for the shabby little thing was now transformed into a regular queen-hen. The farmer's wife thought she must have strayed away from some beautiful foreign country, and gave her a famous breakfast to keep her. Cock-alu was very attentive to her; and as to Hen-alie, she never ceased singing her praises as long as she lived.

Mary Howitt.

SOUP ON A SAUSAGE-PEG

I

"THAT was a very fine dinner yesterday," said an old lady Mouse to another who had not been at the festive gathering. "I sat number twenty-one from the old Mouse King, so that I was not badly placed. Should you like to hear the order of the banquet? The courses were very well arranged: mouldy bread, bacon-rind, tallow candle, and sausage, and then the same dishes over again from the beginning. It was just as good as having two banquets one after the other. Everyone was just as free and easy as if one were at home. Nothing was left but the pegs at the end of the sausages; and the talk turned upon these, and at last the expression, 'Soup on sausage-skewers,' or as they have the proverb in the neighbouring country, 'Soup on a sausage-peg,' was mentioned. Everyone had heard the proverb, but no one had ever tasted the sausage-peg soup, much less prepared it. The old Mouse King stood up,

and promised that the young lady Mouse who could best prepare that soup should be his Queen, and a year was allowed for the trial."

"That was not at all bad," said the other Mouse; "but how does one prepare this soup?"

"Ah, how is it prepared? That is what all the young lady Mice, and the old ones, too, are asking. They would all very much like to be Queen, but they don't want to

"Each of them wished to proceed to one of the four quarters of the globe."

take the trouble to go out into the world and learn how to prepare the soup, and that they would certainly have to do. But everyone has not the gift of leaving the family circle and the chimney-corner. In foreign parts one cannot get cheese-rinds and bacon every day. No; one must bear hunger, and perhaps be eaten up alive by a cat."

Such were probably the reasons which deterred the greater number of young lady Mice from going out into the world to learn how to make "soup from a sausage-

peg." Only four Mice announced that they were ready to depart. They were young and brisk, but poor. Each of them wished to proceed to one of the four quarters of the globe, and then it would be seen which of them was favoured by fortune. Each one took a sausage-peg, so as to keep in mind the object of the journey. The stiff sausage-skewer was to be to them as a pilgrim's staff.

It was at the beginning of May when they set out, and they did not return till the May of the following year, and then only three of them appeared. The fourth did not report herself, nor was there any news of her, though the day of trial was close at hand.

"Yes, there is always some drawback in even the pleasantest affair," said the Mouse King.

And then he gave orders that all the Mice within a circuit of many miles should be invited. They were to assemble in the kitchen, where the three travelled Mice would stand in a row, while a Sausage-Peg, shrouded in crape, was set up as a memorial of the fourth, who was missing. No one was to proclaim his opinion till the Mouse King had settled what was to be said. And now let us hear.

II

What the First Little Mouse had seen and learned in her Travels

When I went out into the wide world (said the little Mouse), I thought, as many think at my age, that I had already learned everything; but that was not the case. Years must pass before one gets so far. I went to sea at once. I went in a ship that steered towards the North.

They had told me that the ship's cook must know how to manage things at sea, but it is easy enough to manage things when one has plenty of sides of bacon and whole tubs of salt pork and mouldy flour. One has delicate living on board, but one does not learn to prepare soup on a sausage-peg. We sailed along for many days and nights. The ship rocked fearfully, and we did not get off without a wetting. When we at last reached the port to which we were bound, I left the ship, and it was high up in the Far North.

It is a wonderful thing to go out of one's own corner at home and sail in a ship, where one has a sort of corner, too, and then suddenly to find oneself hundreds of miles away in a strange land. I saw great trackless forests of pine and birch, which smelt so strong that I sneezed and thought of sausage. There were great lakes there, too. When I came close to them the waters were quite clear, but from a distance they looked black as ink. Great swans floated on them. I thought at first they were spots of foam, they lay so still; but then I saw them walk and fly, and I knew what they were. They belong to the goose family. One can see that by their walk; for no one can deny his parentage. I kept with my own kind. I associated with the forest and field Mice, who, by the way, know very little, especially as regards cookery. The thought that soup might be boiled on a sausage-peg was such a startling statement to them that it flew at once from mouth to mouth through the whole forest. They declared the problem could never be solved, and little did I think that there, on the very first night, I should be shown the method of its preparation.

It was in the height of summer, and that, the Mice said, was the reason why the wood smelt so strong, and

"'I will lend the sausage-peg,' I said, 'but not to keep!'"

why the herbs were so fragrant, and the lakes so transparent, and yet so dark, with their white swimming swans.

On the margin of the wood, among three or four houses, a pole as tall as the mainmast of a ship had been set up, and from its summit hung wreaths and fluttering ribbons. This was called a Maypole. Men and maids danced round this pole, and sang as loudly as they could to the violin of the fiddler. There were merry doings at sundown and in the moonlight, but I took no part in them. What has a little Mouse to do with a May dance? I sat in the soft moss and held my sausage-peg fast. The moon threw its beams specially on one spot, where a tree stood, covered with moss so exceedingly fine that I may almost venture to say it was as fine as the skin of the Mouse King; but it was of a green colour, and that is a great relief to the eye.

All at once the most charming little people came marching forth. They were only tall enough to reach to my knee. They looked like men, but were better shaped. They called themselves elves, and wore delicate clothes of flower-leaves trimmed with the wings of flies and gnats, which looked very elegant. Directly they appeared they seemed to be seeking for something—I do not know what; but at last some of them came towards me, and the chief pointed to my Sausage-Peg, and said, "That is just such a one as we want: it is pointed; it is the very thing!" and the longer he looked at my staff the more delighted he became.

"I will lend it," I said, "but not to keep."

"Not to keep!" they all repeated; and they seized the Sausage-Peg, which I gave up to them, and danced away to the spot where the fine moss grew, and here they set up the peg in the midst of the green. They wanted to

have a Maypole of their own, and the one they now had seemed cut out for them, and they decorated it, so that it was beautiful to behold.

First, little spiders spun it round with gold thread and hung it all over with fluttering veils and flags so finely woven, bleached so snowy white in the moonshine, that they dazzled my eyes. They took colours from the butterfly's wing, and strewed these over the white linen, and flowers and diamonds gleamed upon it, so that I did not know my Sausage-Peg again. There is not in all the world such a Maypole as they made of it.

And now came the real great party of elves. They wore no clothes at all, and looked as genteel as possible, and they invited me to be present at the feast ; but I was to keep at a certain distance, for I was too large for them.

And now began such music ! It sounded like thousands of glass bells, so full, so rich, that I thought the swans were singing. I fancied also that I heard the voice of the cuckoo and the blackbird, and at last the whole forest seemed to join in. I heard children's voices, the sound of bells, and the song of birds—the most glorious melodies—and all came from the elves' Maypole, my Sausage-Peg. I should never have believed that so much could come out of it, but that depends very much on the hands into which it falls. I was quite touched. I wept, as a little Mouse may weep, with pure pleasure.

The night was far too short. In the morning dawn the breeze began to blow, the mirror of the forest lake was covered with ripples, and all the delicate veils and flags fluttered away in the air. The waving garlands of spider's web, the hanging bridges and balustrades, and whatever else they are called, flew away as if they were

nothing at all. Six elves brought me back my Sausage-Peg, and asked me at the same time if I had any wish that they could gratify ; so I asked them if they could tell me how soup was made on a Sausage-Peg.

" How *we* do it ?" asked the Chief of the Elves, with a smile. " Why, you have just seen it. I fancy you hardly know your Sausage-Peg again ?"

" You only mean that as a joke," I replied. And then I told them in so many words why I had undertaken a journey, and what great hopes were founded on the operation at home. " What advantage," I asked, " can come to our Mouse King, and to our whole powerful State, from the fact of my having witnessed all this festivity ? I cannot shake it out of the Sausage-Peg, and say : ' Look, here is the peg ; now the soup will come.' That would be a dish that could only be put on the table when the guests had dined."

Then the elf dipped his little finger into the cup of a blue violet, and said to me :

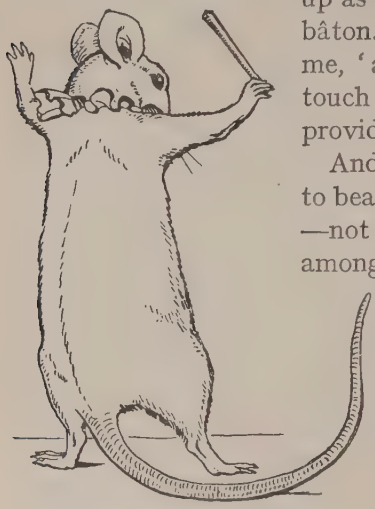
" See here ! I will anoint your pilgrim's staff, and when you go back to your country, and come to the castle of the Mouse King, you have but to touch him with the staff, and violets will spring forth and cover its whole surface, even in the coldest winter-time. And so I think I have given you something to carry home, and a little more than something !"

But before the little Mouse said what this " something more " was, she stretched her staff out towards the King, and in very truth the most beautiful bunch of violets burst forth, and the scent was so powerful that the Mouse King instantly ordered the Mice who stood nearest the chimney to thrust their tails into the fire, and make

a smell of burning, for the odour of the violets was not to be borne, and was not of the kind he liked.

"But what was the 'something more' of which you spoke?" asked the Mouse King.

"Why," the little Mouse answered, "I think it is what they call effect!" And herewith she turned the staff round, and lo! there was not a single flower to be seen on it. She held only the naked skewer, and lifted this up as a musical conductor lifts his bâton. "'Violets,' the elf said to me, 'are for sight and smell and touch; therefore it yet remains to provide for hearing and taste!'"



"The little Mouse began to beat time."

And now the little Mouse began to beat time, and music was heard—not such as sounded in the forest among the elves, but such as is heard in the kitchen. There was a bubbling sound of boiling and roasting, and all at once it seemed as if the sound were rushing through every chimney, and pots or kettles were boiling over. The fire-shovel hammered upon the brass kettle, and then on a sudden all was quiet again. They heard the quiet subdued song of the tea-kettle, and it was wonderful to hear. They could not quite tell if the kettle were beginning to sing or leaving off, and the little pot simmered, and the big pot simmered, and neither cared for the other. There seemed to be no reason at all in the pots. And the little

Mouse flourished her stick more and more wildly. The pots foamed, threw up large bubbles, boiled over, and the wind roared and whistled through the chimney. Oh, it became so terrible that the little Mouse lost her stick at last!

"That was a heavy soup!" said the Mouse King. "Shall we not soon hear about the preparations?"

"That was all," said the little Mouse, with a bow.

"That all! Then we shall be glad to hear what the next has to relate," said the Mouse King.

III

What the Second Little Mouse had to tell

I was born in the Palace library (said the second Mouse). I and several members of our family never knew the happiness of getting into the dining-room, much less into the store-room. On my journey and here to-day are the only times I have seen a kitchen. We have, indeed, often been compelled to suffer hunger in the library, but we get a good deal of knowledge. The rumour penetrated even to us of the royal prize offered to those who could cook Soup upon a Sausage-Peg, and it was my old grandmother who thereupon ferreted out a manuscript, which she certainly could not read, but which she had heard read out, and in which it was written: "Those who are poets can boil Soup on a Sausage-Peg." She asked me if I were a poet. I knew nothing of the matter, and then she told me I must go out and manage to become one. I again asked what was requisite, for it was as difficult for me to find that out as to prepare the soup; but grand-

mother had heard a good deal of reading, and she said three things were especially necessary : " Understanding, imagination, feeling. If you can manage to obtain these three, you are a poet, and the Sausage-Peg affair will be quite easy to you."

And I went forth, and marched towards the West, away into the wide world, to become a poet.

Understanding is the most important thing in every affair. I knew that, for the two other things are not held in half such respect, and consequently I went out

" She asked me if I were a poet."

first to seek understanding. Yes ; where does he dwell ? " Go to the ant and be wise," said the great King Solomon. I knew that from my literary experience, and I never stopped till I came to the first great ant-hill, and there I placed myself on the watch to become wise.

The ants are a respectable people. They are understanding itself. Everything with them is like a well-worked sum that comes right. To work and to lay eggs, they say, is to live while you live and to provide for posterity, and accordingly that is what they do. They were divided into the clean and the dirty ants. The rank

of each is indicated by a number, and the Ant Queen is Number One, and her view is the only correct one. She is the receptacle of all wisdom, and that was important for me to know. She spoke so much, and it was all so clever, that it sounded to me like nonsense. She declared her ant-hill was the loftiest thing in the world, though close by it grew a tree which was certainly loftier, much loftier—that could not be denied—and therefore it was never mentioned. One evening an ant had lost herself upon the tree. She had crept up the stem, not up to the crown, but higher than any ant had climbed until then, and when she turned and came back home she talked of something far higher than the ant-hill that she had found in her travels; but the other ants considered that an insult to the whole community, and consequently she was condemned to wear a muzzle and to solitary confinement. But a short time afterwards another ant got on the tree, and made the same journey and the same discovery, and this one spoke with emphasis and distinctly, as they said; and as, moreover, she was very much respected, they believed her, and when she died they erected an egg-shell as a memorial of her, for they had a great respect for the sciences.

I saw (continued the little Mouse) that the ants are always running to and fro with their eggs on their backs. One of them once dropped her egg. She exerted herself greatly to pick it up again, but she could not succeed. Then two others came up, and helped her with all their might, till they nearly dropped their own eggs over it; but then they at once relaxed their exertions, for each should think of himself first. The Ant Queen had declared that by so doing they showed at once heart and understanding.

"These two qualities," she said, "place us ants on the highest step among all reasoning beings. Understanding is seen among us all in different degrees, and I have the greatest share of understanding." And so saying, she raised herself on her hind-legs, so that she was easily to be recognized. I could not be mistaken, and I ate her up. We were to go to the ants to learn wisdom—and I had got the Queen!

I now went on nearer to the before-mentioned lofty tree. It was an oak, and had a great trunk and a far-spreading top, and was very old. I knew that a living being dwelt here—a Dryad, as it is called, who is born with the tree, and dies with it. I had heard about this in the library, and now I saw an oak-tree and an oak-girl. She uttered a piercing cry when she saw me so near. Like all females, she was very much afraid of mice, and she had more ground for fear than others, for I might have gnawed through the stem of the tree on which her life depended.

I spoke to the maiden in a friendly and frank way, and bade her take courage. And she took me up in her delicate hand, and when I had told her my reason for coming out into the wide world she promised me that perhaps on that very evening I should have one of the two treasures of which I was still in quest. She told me that Phantasus, the genius of imagination, was her good friend, that he was very beautiful indeed, and that he rested many an hour under the leafy boughs of the tree, which then rustled more strongly than ever over the pair of them. He called her his dryad, she said, and the tree his tree, for the grand gnarled oak was just to his taste, with its root burrowing so deep in the earth, and the stem and crown rising so high out in the fresh

"She took me up in her delicate hand."

air, and knowing the beating snow, and the sharp wind, and the warm sunshine as they deserve to be known.

"Yes," the Dryad continued, "the birds sing aloft there in the branches, and tell each other of strange countries they have visited; and on the only dead bough the stork has built a nest, which is highly ornamental, and, moreover, one gets to hear something of the Land of the Pyramids. All that is very pleasing to Phantasus, but it is not enough for him. I myself must talk to him, and tell him of life in the woods, and must go back to my childhood, when I was little, and the tree such a delicate thing that a stinging-nettle overshadowed it, and I have to tell everything up to now, when the tree is great and strong. Sit down under the green thyme, and pay attention, and when Phantasus comes I shall find an opportunity to pinch his wings and to pull out a little feather. Take the pen—no better is given to any poet—and it will be enough for you!"

And when Phantasus came the feather was plucked, and I seized it. I put it in water, and held it there till it grew soft. It was very hard to digest, but I nibbled it up at last. It is very easy to gnaw oneself into being a poet, though there are many things one must do. Now I had these two things—imagination and understanding—and through these I knew that the third was to be found in the library, for a great man has said and written that there are romances whose sole and single use is that they relieve people of tears. I remembered a few of these old books, which had always looked especially palatable, and were much thumbed and very greasy, having evidently absorbed a great deal of feeling into themselves.

I betook myself back to the library, and, so to speak, devoured a whole novel—that is, the essence of it, the

interior part, for I left the crust or binding. When I had digested this, and a second in addition, I felt a stirring within me, and I ate a bit of a third romance, and now I was a poet. I said so to myself, and told the others also. I had headache and chestache, and I can't tell what aches besides. I began thinking what kind of stories could be made to refer to a Sausage-Peg, and many pegs, and

"I ate a bit of a third romance."

sticks, and staves, and splinters came into my mind. The Ant Queen must have had a particularly fine understanding. I remembered the man who took a white stick in his mouth, by which means he could render himself and the stick invisible. I thought of stick hobby-horses, of stock rhymes, of breaking the staff over an offender, and goodness knows how many more phrases concerning sticks, stocks, staves, and pegs. All my

thoughts ran upon sticks, staves, and pegs, and when one is a poet (and I am a poet, for I have worked most terribly hard to become one) a person can make poetry on these subjects. I shall therefore be able to wait upon you every day with a poem or a history, and that's the Soup I have to offer.

"Let us hear what the third has to say," was now the Mouse King's command.

"Peep, peep!" cried a small voice at the kitchen-door, and a little Mouse—it was the fourth of the Mice who had contended for the prize, the one whom they looked on as dead—shot in like an arrow. She toppled the Sausage-Peg with the crape covering over in a moment. She had been running day and night, and had travelled on the railway, in the goods-train, having watched her opportunity, and yet she had almost come too late. She pressed forward, looking very much rumpled, and she had lost her Sausage-Peg, but not her voice, for she at once took up the word, as if they had been waiting only for her, and wanted to hear none but her, and as if everything else in the world were of no consequence. She spoke at once, and spoke fully. She had appeared so suddenly that no one found time to object to her speech or to her while she was speaking.

And now let us hear what she said.

IV

What the Fourth Mouse, who spoke before the Third, had to tell

I betook myself immediately to the largest town (she said). The name escapes me ; I have a bad memory for names. From the railway I was carried with some confiscated goods to the Council-House, and when I arrived there I ran into the dwelling of the gaoler. The gaoler was talking of his prisoners, and especially of one who had spoken unconsidered words. These words had given rise to others, and these latter had been written down and recorded.

" The whole thing is Soup on a Sausage-Peg, as the saying is," said the gaoler ; " but the Soup may cost him his neck."

Now, this gave me an interest in the prisoner. I watched my opportunity, and slipped into his prison, for there is a mouse-hole to be found behind every locked door. The prisoner looked pale, and had a great beard, and bright sparkling eyes. The lamp flickered and smoked, but the walls were so accustomed to that that they grew none the blacker for it. The prisoner scratched pictures and verses in white upon the black ground, but I did not read them. I think he found it tedious, and I was a welcome guest. He lured me with breadcrumbs, with whistling, and with friendly words. He was glad to see me, and gradually I got to trust him, and we became good friends. He let me run upon his hand, his arm, and into his sleeve. He let me creep about in his beard, and called me his little friend. I really got to

love him, too, for these things are a matter of give and take. I forgot my mission in the wide world, forgot my Sausage-Peg, that I had placed in a crack in the floor—it is lying there still. I wished to stay where I was, for if I went away the poor prisoner would have no one at all, and that's having *too* little in this world. *I* stayed, but *he* did not stay. He spoke to me very mournfully the last time, gave me twice as much bread and cheese as usual, and kissed his hand to me ; then he went away, and never came back. I don't know his history.

" Soup on a Sausage-Peg !" said the gaoler, to whom I now went ; but I should not have trusted him. He took me in his hand certainly, but he popped me into a cage, a treadmill. That is a horrible engine, in which you go round and round without going any farther, and people laugh at you into the bargain.

The gaoler's grand-daughter was a charming little thing, with a mass of curly hair that shone like gold, and such merry eyes, and such a smiling mouth !

" You poor little mouse !" she said, as she peeped into my ugly cage ; and she drew out the iron rod, and forth I jumped to the window-board, and from thence to the roof-spout. Free, free ! I thought only of that, and not of the goal of my journey.

It was dark, and night was coming on. I took up my quarters in an old tower, where dwelt a watchman and an owl. That is a creature like a cat, who has the great failing that she eats mice. But one may be mistaken, and so was I, for this was a very respectable, well-educated old owl. She knew more than the watchman, and as much as I. The young owls were always making a racket, but "Go and make Soup on a Sausage-Peg !" were the hardest words she could prevail on herself to

utter, she was so fondly attached to her family. Her conduct gave me so much confidence that from the crack in which I was crouching I called out "Peep!" to her. This confidence of mine pleased her hugely, and she assured me I should be under her protection, and that no creature should be allowed to do me wrong. She would reserve me for herself for the winter, when there would be short commons.

"This was a very respectable old owl."

She was in every respect a clever woman, and explained to me how the watchman could only "whoop" with the horn that hung at his side, adding: "He is terribly conceited about it, and imagines he's an owl in the tower. Wants to do great things, but is very small. Soup on a Sausage-Peg!"

I begged the owl to give me the recipe for this soup, and then she explained the matter to me.

"Soup on a Sausage-Peg," she said, "is only a human proverb, and is to be understood thus: Each thinks his own way the best, but the whole signifies nothing."

"The Mouse King put forth his tail."

"Nothing!" I exclaimed. I was quite struck. Truth is not always agreeable, but truth is above everything, and that's what the old owl said. I now thought about it, and readily perceived that if I brought what was *above everything*, I brought something which was far beyond Soup on a Sausage-Peg. So I hastened away that I might get home in time, and bring the highest and best, that is above everything—namely, the truth. The Mice are an enlightened people, and the King is above them all. He is capable of making me Queen, for the sake of truth.

"Your truth is a falsehood," said the Mouse who had not yet spoken. "I can prepare the soup, and I mean to prepare it."

V

How it was Prepared.

"I did not travel," the third Mouse said; "I remained in my country. That's the right thing to do. There's no necessity for travelling; one can get everything as good here. I stayed at home. I have not learned what I know from supernatural beings, or gobbled it up, or held converse with owls. I have what I know through my own reflections. Will you make haste and put that kettle on the fire? So—now water must be poured in—quite full—up to the brim! So—now more fuel. Make up the fire, that the water may boil; it must boil over and over! So—I now throw the peg in. Will the King now be pleased to dip his tail in the boiling water, and to stir *it* round with the said tail? The longer the King stirs it, the more powerful will the soup become. It costs

nothing at all. No further materials are necessary ; only stir it round !"

" Cannot anyone else do that ?" asked the Mouse King.

" No," replied the Mouse ; " the power is contained only in the tail of the Mouse King."

And the water boiled and bubbled, and the Mouse King stood close beside the kettle—there was almost danger in it—and he put forth his tail, as the mice do in the dairy when they skim the cream from a pan of milk, afterwards licking their creamy tails ; but his tail only penetrated into the hot steam, and then he sprang hastily down from the hearth.

" Of course, certainly you are my Queen," he said. " We will put off the soup question till our golden wedding in fifty years' time, so that the poor of my subjects, who will then be fed, may have something to which they can look forward with pleasure for a long time."

And soon the wedding was held. But many of the mice said, as they were returning home, that it could not be really called Soup on a Sausage-Peg, but rather soup on a mouse's tail. They said that some of the stories had been very cleverly told, but the whole thing might have been different. " *I* should have told it so, and so, and so !"

Thus said the critics, who are always wise—after the fact.

And this story went out into the wide world everywhere, and opinions varied concerning it, but the story remained as it was. And that's the best in great things and in small, so also with regard to Soup on a Sausage-Peg —not to expect any thanks for it.

Hans Christian Andersen.

THE FOREST MILL

I

A MERRY, honest-hearted soldier, who had fought bravely for his country, was journeying home from the wars. With his knapsack on his back, his pipe in his mouth, his knotted stick in his hand, he plodded on his way, and was now thinking with much contentment about the nearest inn where he might turn in at noon to dine. He had had sorry quarters the night before.

Plunged in deep thought, he did not notice that he had quitted the highway. The road kept growing more lonely, the brushwood wilder and more dense, and before he was aware he found himself in a thick forest.

"No matter," said the merry fellow to himself, "it is cooler marching in the shade, and one's pipe of tobacco does not burn away so fast as out there in the wind; and a song sounds as well again in the greenwood, and that every bird knows as well as I do."

As he paced along he noticed something white moving in the air before him like a little curling vapour, which took all manner of shapes as it floated down the wind.

"Umph!" he muttered, "what a strange smoke comes from my pipe to-day! It makes all kind of antic figures before my eyes! One time it looks like a cloud, another time like a bird, then like a face, then like a hand beckoning to me. I never met with such a thing in all my life!"

His pipe was soon burnt out, but still the flickering smoke continued.

He rubbed his eyes. The white object still went whirring on before him, but he now saw plainly that it was a great white butterfly. He had never seen one so large before.

Keeping his eyes always fixed on the fluttering insect, he had soon lost the last trace of any footpath. He began to crave for food, and yet, far and wide, there was no dwelling of man to be seen, much less a kitchen chimney.

"Comrade," he called to the butterfly, which still fluttered on before him, where the wood was most passable, "you seem well acquainted with this wood. For the fun of the thing, I will follow your standard a little longer. Suppose you were to bring me into good quarters as quickly as you can!"

So he went on very obediently after his new leader. The wood soon grew lighter, the babbling of a brook was heard nearer and nearer, a dog barked at a distance, and it was not long before he heard the clack of a mill. Never

had the finest regimental band or the most brilliant rattle of the drums sounded so nobly in his ears as this monotonous clacking, for his fancy already saw whole troops of roasted pullets, geese, and pigs marching to the top of the mill-wheel in rank and file into his mouth.

This thought thrilled merrily through all his limbs. His legs, which just before he could hardly drag along,

"There stood a crazy old mill."

now strode forward of themselves. He soon saw between the trees the sunshine gilding a thatched roof; next, a paling appeared beyond the thicket, and as at last he got clear of the bushes in an open space, close in sight, there stood a crazy old mill. A glorious sight! But the mill-door was shut; the blackened chimney towered aloft, but

no smoke came forth ; and far or near there was no trace or sound of any human being to be seen or heard.

The white butterfly fluttered straight to the house, and without more ado slipped in at the great keyhole of the door. With the best will to follow him, our soldier could not enter that way.

" Hold your noise !" he shouted to the gaunt dog in the kennel, who, straining furiously at his chain, barked with a hoarse voice over the broken-down palings at him. The soldier picked up a stone, and the brute was silenced ; then he rattled at the door and lock. " Hilloa ! house, here !" he shouted, thundering at the door with knotted stick and boot-heel. All was still silent within.

" A beggarly household this !" grumbled the hungry traveller, looking round him in all directions. The only living being which he saw on that side of the brook was an old shaggy-coated ass, which was tugging at a thistle in the meadow, and lazily raised his eyes towards him.

" Oh, happiest of brutes !" cried the soldier. " Alas ! oh, that I had but a dinner inside my skin as much to my liking as thy thistle-fare is to yours. However, here goes !" and he once more pushed at the door with such force that it flew open.

" Victory !" he shouted, waving his hat. Singing and whistling, with his cudgel on his shoulder, he entered the house.

II

No human creature to be seen in the mill ! Only the mill-wheel clacked on and on, making the timbers and walls of the crazy house shake with its measured strokes. The soldier's shout of " House, here !" died away along the

smoke-blackened passages. Following a sure instinct, he went past two closed doors to the farthest, which stood open, and, as was to be expected, led into the kitchen.

Black enough everything looked in it. Cabbages and turnips, half trimmed, lay on the floor around, with the knife by them. In the fireplace over the burnt-out wood-ashes hung a kettle of water ; but the one thing not to be seen was a cook-maid. Instead of her a sandy cat was seated on a footstool. Puss blinked her eyes, looked piteously at the soldier, and then blinked her eyes again. He peeped into the pots. All empty !

" Now, may nine hundred and ninety-nine cannons blow this hunger-stricken fortress ninety-nine times its own height into the air ! There is not a pistol-bullet to choose between the look of things here and in my own stomach ! But, after all, the dinner must be on the table in the room within. I am just in the nick of time for the carving."

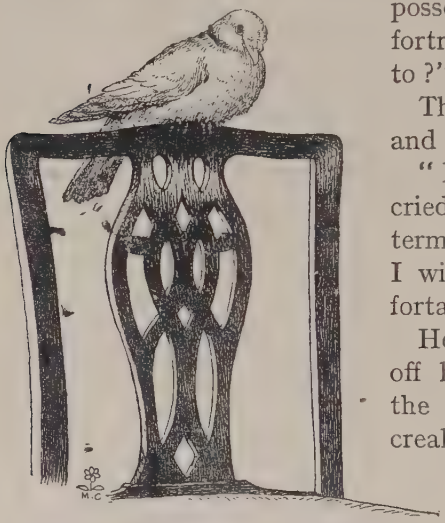
The next door led to the sitting-room. No one there either. An old black hen was sitting on a cushion in the little window-seat. The daylight shed but a feeble mysterious gleam through the thick leaves of a vine which almost hid the window. On a table before the hen lay a piece of knitting, a pair of spectacles, a song-book, a bunch of keys, and an open snuffbox. All was silent except the ticking of the clock against the wall and the whirring of the butterfly's wings, which had guided the soldier hither, and was now beating its head vainly against the window-panes.

The merry soldier stood right before the hen. It was always his custom to discourse aloud with everything that came across him, man or beast, his musket or his boots. With soldierly air, hand to hat, he addressed her :

"Your Excellency, Madam Cacklehen, are you the commandant of this fortress?"

The hen winked with her swollen red eyelids, as if she answered "Yes" to his question.

"Good!" he went on. "I beg to report to Your Excellency that I, Hans Quakenberger, disbanded musketeer, am minded without more words to take from this time full possession of this mill or fortress. Terms agreed to?"



"A gentle little ring-dove was perched on the chair-back."

The hen raised her head, and seemed to nod to him.

"Bravo, old cackler!" cried the soldier; "the terms are settled, and now I will make myself comfortable."

He threw his knapsack off his shoulder down on the stone bench, which creaked again under the weight of it, drew his boots off his tired legs, and looked about for slippers. No such things were to be seen in the room, so in search of them he poked his head through the next door. This led into a parlour, where everything looked very neat, as if some trim, tidy maiden must live there. No dust on the furniture, a workbox on the table, and even a little jingling spinet by the window. It was open, and a music-book stood open on its desk. With all this again no human soul was here. Only a gentle little ring-dove was

perched on the chair-back before the spinet. It seemed to be no laughing matter with her. Her feathers were ruffled, her little neck drawn in quite short, her head mournfully hanging on one side, and her eyes immovably fixed on the music-book.

"I beg your pardon a thousand times, you pretty darling!" cried the soldier to the dove, and, still standing in the doorway, he took his rumpled hat off down to the ground. But the jest turned to earnest. The sight of the dove in a moment exerted a strange influence over him; he could not turn his eyes away from her.

"O darling pet of ten thousand!" he at last stammered out, quite bewildered. "On my word, Hans Quakenberger was ever a great lover of doves—not stewed, though, so much as roasted!"

The dove's feathers quivered, as if she shook all over with fright.

"But as sure as I am a brave fellow," he went on, "though I should turn into a wolf for sheer hunger, I would never hurt you, you darling little creature!"

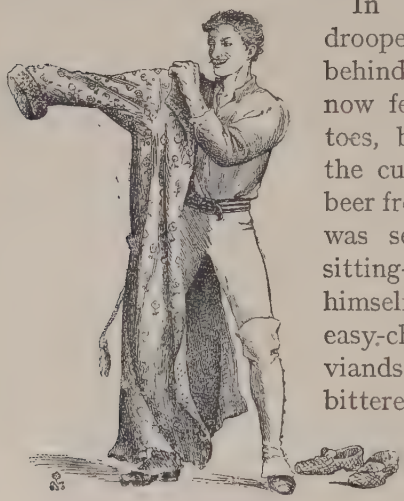
The dove gave him so kind and yet so sad a look that the good-natured fellow's heart was quite melted. He drew back out of the room, shutting the door behind him. This soft mood did not last long, to be sure, and he went on with his examination of the house.

Opposite to the parlour another door led into a sleeping-room. Here there were two good beds, and two pairs of slippers by them. On the door-peg hung a softly wadded flowered dressing-gown, and against the wall a good half-dozen of long tobacco-pipes, some of them even filled. All this came as if at his call. His feet were soon fitted into the slippers, and the dressing-gown became him well. The next thing was to provide a good dinner. Touching

this point a soldier who has served in the wars needs no teacher.

The first thing he did was to take away the bunch of keys from under the old hen's beak. She screamed and flapped her wings, as if she had been defending a whole brood of chickens. It was no good.

"Old dame," quoth the soldier, "you may be happy if I don't catch you by the neck and make a meal of you!"



"The dressing-gown became him well."

In a twinkling the hen drooped her wings and crept behind the stove. Our soldier now fetched bacon and potatoes, bread and cheese, from the cupboard, and a flagon of beer from the cellar. When all was set on the table in the sitting-room, he gravely threw himself into the grandfather's easy-chair, and fell upon the viands as if they had been his bitterest enemies, though at that moment they were the very things he loved best in the world.

The meal was eaten, the flagon drained, and after his feast the musketeer was so overcome with weariness that he could no longer resist the allurements of the beds which he had just seen. He went into the bedroom and shut the door after him, when, happening just to look back through the little window in the door, he was amused to see the field of battle which he had just quitted—the dining-table—all alive again. The hen had crept out from behind the

stove, the cat had stolen in from the kitchen, the dove had flown in from the parlour, and all were now seated on the table, devouring with keen appetite the waste

"The hen, the cat, and the dove, were devouring the fragments."

fragments which were lying about. He had no thought of disturbing them.

Weary as he was, his merry mood did not forsake him. With a "Hi, there!" he sent the slippers flying off his feet quite up to the ceiling, and, without undressing, sprang

at one leap into the bed. He had hardly time to close his eyes when he broke out into a loud snore, which made a most harmonious concert with the clack of the mill-wheel.

III

Next morning—it was Sunday—the sun had gilded the soldier's red moustache before he awoke. The first object that met his eye was the little black hen. She was seated on the pillow of the bed which stood side by side with his own. She was clapping her wings and looking eagerly out of the window. Curious! There stood the old shaggy ass outside, snuffing at the window-pane. He was grinning at the hen with his ugly mouth, as if to wish her good-morning.

The silent interchange of looks between the two animals afforded our merry companion much amusement for a long time.

But as the hen kept flapping her wings higher and higher, he saw something sparkle under one of them.

"Give that to me," cried he, and pulled it out from among her feathers. It was the treasured bunch of keys which he had to thank for such a savoury meal. The hen was dismayed, and cried out in a rage, as she had done the day before. But getting a tap on her bill, she flew behind the stove, and the ass's head vanished from the window.

All these occurrences would have amazed any other man, if they had not frightened him, but Hans Quakenberger was a stranger to fears and fancies. He was out of bed in a twinkling, and was soon, with his smoking pipe in his mouth (it was one of the long ones from the

bedroom), going the round of the house. In parlour and kitchen he found everything as he had left it the day before. As he went towards the parlour, where he saw the dove yesterday, he made a sudden halt. Something seemed at one moment to urge him on, at the next to restrain him. This came from a dream which he had had in the night, in which strange things had passed before him. He had, indeed, already forgotten them; still, they had left behind a feeling such as he had never known till then.

He now distinctly heard someone in the chamber striking softly on the spinet the tones of a morning hymn. This could only be done by one of human race. Who could it be? He applied his ear to the door and listened. The air which he heard was well known to him; it was that of the beautiful morning hymn which his dear mother used always to sing to him at home. Between the notes of the spinet he heard the dove's voice in a low coo-oo, coo-oo. Nothing more reached his ear, but this cooing sounded pleasing and devout. His dream of the past night recurred to him, and he grew as solemn as if he had been standing in a church. At last, however, curiosity urged him on to peep through a chink in the door.

Even now there was no one to be seen, but there was the dove perched on the spinet. It was she who, with her wings spread, moved softly and gently up and down the keys, and made them sound so sweetly, while, with her head turned to the window in the morning light, she sounded the single note of her voice, with which all the forest-birds chimed in in full chorus.

This was a real Sunday morning.

Hans stood by the crevice without stirring. His first

movement was to begin slowly twirling his moustache, first with one hand, then with the other, like one sunk in deep thought.

"Stuff and nonsense!" he muttered to himself, and faced to the left about, but very quietly. Then he went on tiptoe to his knapsack, took a letter out of it, with which he sat down in the great armchair, and fell to reading it as earnestly as if it had been a prayer-book. It was a letter which his fond mother had shortly before written to him from home. The long pipe was still stuck in his mouth, but it had gone out without his noticing it. This was a rare event in his life.

IV

Hans was soon very comfortably settled in the mill. Every day he thought he must soon get sight of someone. He had many reasons for this belief. When he arrived he found the mill in full work, and there was still a great stock of meal and corn there. Even supposing that the miller, with his wife and men, were never to come to light again, still the customers must certainly present themselves to fetch away their meal or to bring corn. Moreover, the thought would sometimes go whirling through his head like mill-wheels whether he might not himself hoist his standard upon the old lumber-chest, as he called the mill. His dead father had been a miller, and he as his journeyman had helped him stoutly at the craft. From of old his highest ambition had been to own a mill. But then the wild war had swept over the land, and run a black stroke through this calculation. His parents were impoverished by the war; his father soon died, and he

himself was taken for a soldier. To be sure, he was now carrying a few good dollars of prize-money home from the war in his knapsack, but they were scarcely enough to pay for a mill-stone, to say nothing of a mill.

One day the soldier had been ranging the forest, shooting rabbits for a pastime. He had made a wide circle, but as yet had found no way out of the forest. Thick wood as far as he could see, except that a few footpaths crossed each other here and there, which, indeed, had almost made him lose his way. He plainly saw, too, ass's hoof-prints—most likely of those which a little while before had carried corn to the mill. Tired with his wandering, he thought that evening he would indulge himself a little. He brought up a flask of wine from the cellar, and emptied it to the health of his mother and of his companions, the animals, and especially to the prosperity of the pretty dove. Then he went to bed. He could not close an eye for heat, so he opened the great window to get a breath of fresh air. This failed not to have the desired effect : he soon lay fast asleep.

It might have been about midnight when he was awakened by the noise of a heavy body falling close to him.

" By the powers !" he cried, " is the old house going to fall in on my head ?"

It was pitch dark ; the moon was not yet risen above the trees. Stupid with sleep as he was, he groped about for the other bed, which stood by the side of his own. Something like a flour-sack was lying on it. This tranquillized him.

" The ceiling overhead can't be shot-proof, however," he muttered to himself, " or the lumbering great flour-sack could never have come tumbling down from the garret

without 'With your leave!' or 'By your leave!' Well, at least it has not killed me outright."

He was soon snoring away again, but that did not last long. He was awakened by a heavy weight pressing on his breast, which he found on feeling about to be some hard hairy thing. Half asleep, he took it for his knapsack, and, pushing it off him, went to sleep again. Now he began to dream: a huge cannon seemed to be brought up close to his left ear, which every second puffed a mighty cloud of smoke in his face; he tried to turn his head over to the other side, but there stood a gigantic cannoneer thrusting his gun-washer in his face, which so tickled his nose and lips that he could not keep from bursting out laughing, and so for the third time he woke up.

But the tickling and puffing which had annoyed him in his dreams still continued.

He sat upright. The moon was high above the trees, and shone brightly in through the open window on the next bed. What did he now see? The cannon of his dream was, in truth, nothing else but the head of the old shaggy donkey, who was lying fast asleep by his side, puffing his sweet breath into Hans's face in a most unmannerly style. One fore-foot, which had before pressed so disagreeably on Hans's breast, still lay close by him on his pillow.

"Oh, master!" cried the musketeer, springing out of bed, "I'll soon send you back again!"

His trusty comrade the cudgel was in his hand in a trice, and he brandished it high to deal the slumbering brute a terrible blow. But at that very moment the hen came screaming from behind the stove, and flew right into the soldier's face, where she flapped her wings so

incessantly in his eyes that he lost sight and hearing, and flourished his cudgel at random in the open air. In the meanwhile the ass awoke, and jumped up with a bounce, which broke down the bed. He had a hard matter to wriggle himself free of the ruins of the bed, but having done so with a fury equal to his past laziness, he made an onset on his opponent. He lashed out every way ; he bit right and left. The soldier found himself in a difficult position in the narrow chamber. Now, too, in at the window rushed the sandy cat. Before Hans was aware of it she was clinging to the nape of his neck, clawing his face so that he was at last forced to lower his cudgel. At the same time the dog outside, baying savagely, strained so at his chain that Hans every moment feared that he, too, would be upon him. In his utmost need he bethought him of the pistol which hung full in the moonlight against the wall above the pipes. Just as he was about to seize it he saw perched on it the dove, who had flown in at the open window. She pecked anxiously at his hand, as if to say she would not give up the weapon. The soldier was startled ; for a moment he hesitated, but the furious beasts pressed on him again. There was no delaying any longer.

" Away there !" he cried, and levelled the pistol at the ass—" away there ! or I'll give you a meal of lead that you won't digest in your lifetime !"

He was on the point of shooting the creature down when the dove came fluttering to and fro before the mouth of the pistol, so that he could not venture to fire. The ass profited by this moment, made one leap clear through the open window, with the cat and the hen at his heels, and after a little while the dove followed them. But by this time Hans's soldier ire being completely

roused, he fired his pistol at random upon the flying animals.

Had he hit one of them? He could not be certain. He only saw them in wavering moonlight disappear among the trees of the forest. The dog, too, had broken loose,

"'*Away there!' he cried.*"

and fled with them. Hans's sleep was at an end. His own thoughts gave him no more rest. At one moment he almost died with laughing at his own exploit, having, with weapon in hand, slain a poor ass as he scampered away; at the next moment he was overcome with alarm lest he

might have wounded someone in the wood, for his ears were still ringing with a piercing shriek which he fancied he had heard after firing the shot.

At last the morning broke.

Hans did not relish his breakfast. He felt quite lonely. No ring-dove came now to feed out of his hand. He was ashamed of his melancholy, and yet could not drive it away. Mill and forest and spinet were all distasteful to him now, and he determined to pursue his march the very next day, though it should lead him to the most savage wilderness.

He had still much to do before he could go to bed that night. The bedroom looked like a dismantled fortress; the broken bed, the footstool, the pipes, all had been hurled in wild disarray in the battle.

As with labour and pain he dragged the mattress out of the heap, he noticed a broken chest under the bed which the ass had knocked about. He peeped in by the lamplight, and oh, wonderful! bright white dollars glittered gaily before his eyes. Many another soldier would have taken the treasure for a good prize. Hans Quakenberger, however, well knew the difference between peace and war.

"Ill-gotten wealth never prospers," said he; "you dollars may wait quietly for your owner. He may perhaps be here to-morrow, and then he shall see that he has had an honest fellow for his guest."

He carefully nailed the chest down again, and pushed it into a corner. Then he threw himself on the bed.

V

He could not get to sleep. He could not but think continually about the unknown inhabitants of the mill, and whether he would ever get a sight of them. That they must be close-handed niggards was sufficiently proved by the silver dollars which he had found in the crazy mill. In spite of that, however, he never allowed any hankering after the alluring treasure to arise in his breast.

By degrees his eyes closed, but after a short slumber he started up again, thinking that he heard the rattle of drums outside.

" Let a poltroon lie still in his nest, not I !" he cried.

He huddled on his clothes, stuck the pistol in his belt, threw his knapsack over his shoulder, and with his trusty comrade, his cudgel, in his hand ran, dark as it was, into the wood, still following the sound of the horns and trumpets. At first he pushed on very well, but soon got among thick bushes, while the martial sounds increased around him. Now they were here, now there, before and behind him, on the right and on the left.

He stood still and looked around him. It seemed to him as if he saw between the black trunks of the oaks a regiment of horse galloping along at a great distance, with glittering helms and breastplates, and swords flashing like the bright moonbeams ; the horses, too, were dazzling white like snow. He turned his head to the other side ; there he saw the very same objects at the very same distance. His head was in a whirl ; he ran first one way and then another, till he stopped nearly exhausted in front of a deep ravine in the rocks. At the end of the ravine three waterfalls seemed to fall foaming towards

him. He was mistaken: they were three dragoons on white horses. They seemed to be little fellows on small horses, but in gorgeous uniforms—ornamented white, blue, and silver. On a sudden, like three flashes of lightning congealed, all at once they stood still before the astonished Hans.

"Who goes there?" cried the latter.

"Enemies," was the answer.

"With all my heart," said Hans, laying his hand on his pistol. "What would you with me?"

"Carry you before a court-martial!"

"Oh, oh! that will take four of us—three to lead me, and I to let myself be led, which I might do if I were a coward. Come on, you moonshine heroes, you glittering milksops!" He levelled his pistol at them.

The action was answered by loud peals of laughter, reverberating a thousandfold among the echoing rocks.

"You barking curs!" cried Hans, furious at their jeers. "Take that for your barking!" He fired his pistol at them.

The shot rang in the narrow ravine like a mighty clap of thunder. The three dragoons stood unhurt before him, but he himself felt such a shock through his whole frame at his own shot that all his limbs were in a manner paralyzed, and the pistol dropped from his hand.

"I am your prisoner, and will follow you," he said firmly.

VI

Plunged in thought at the sudden alteration that had taken place in his affairs, he, with his conductors, reached a gate in the rock, through which they descended into a wide valley.

Now a military march resounded. From several clefts in the rocks regiments of horse rushed out on the open space, in the midst of which were the grand officers. Solemnly they took their seats. The accused was brought forward.

A common dragoon appeared as prosecutor. His name was Night-moth. He spoke as follows:

"Upright judges! since the last full moon I have had my post in the Forest Mill, whither came this ex-dragoon and musketeer. I saw him without more ado take possession of house and home. I saw him live sumptuously and joyously at the cost of his host, eating his bread, drinking his wine, sleeping in his bed, smoking his pipe. I saw him last night pitilessly turn the miller, his wife, child, and maid out of doors. I saw him fire a bullet from the miller's own pistol upon the fugitives, which shot the miller's guiltless daughter dead. Of all these things I accuse this Hans Quakenberger."

"By your favour, my lords the officers," cried the accused, "this rascally Night-moth lies like a knave."

"Bring in the witnesses," said the General. From a hole in the rock came forth the ass, the hen, the cat, and the dog. After them was borne a bier covered with a cloth as dazzling white as new-fallen snow.

"Here are they," said the Judge, "whom you have ill-treated. Can you deny your acts?"

"Under your favour," answered the accused, "if this lazy ass be the miller, this stingy cackling hen his wife, this greedy cat a maid, and this snappish cur a miller's man, why, then I am rightly accused. But now I only ask every brave soldier whether he would let himself be trampled under foot, have his eyes picked out, and his

face scratched to pieces without pulling out his pistol and firing a shot for his life ?"

During this speech the four witnesses seemed as if they would have fallen on the speaker, but were ordered to be quiet.

" Remove the cloth from the bier," said the Judge.

This was done, and there, on a bed of roses, lay the dove with her wings spread and eyes closed, a small red spot visible on her head.

" Hans Quakenberger, do you know her ?" asked the Judge.

" That is my heart's treasure—that is my dove !" exclaimed the soldier, with a heart-rending cry, and threw himself sobbing on the bier. Again he started up from the bier, tore his clothes from his breast, and said : " Put me to death ; I have deserved it."

His eyes were bound with a thick bandage. Twelve dragoons presented their pieces at him. Hans himself gave the word " Fire !"

The silence of death was all round ; only the distant crowing of a cock was heard. Then came a rushing sound as of a mighty whirlwind.

" Is this death ?" cried Hans, and tore the veil from his eyes.

The first beam of morning was just glowing through the clefts of the rocks. The court-martial, with all its dragoons, was gone, and in its place he saw four persons standing beside him. It was the miller, with his wife, his maid, and his man. But before him on a bed of roses and rosemary lay the miller's daughter, a maiden of pale face of surpassing beauty. A chain of black coral adorned her white neck ; there was a small red speck on her forehead.

Hans stood a long time as if in a dream. The rising sun poured a stream of light down the ravine, and as it shone on the maiden's pale face her cheeks began to blush and bloom fresher and fairer every moment, till the roses on which she lay paled beside them.

Hans did not notice that the sun was risen, but as the maiden opened her eyes before him there dawned for him the sun which was to shine upon him through life. He threw himself down by her and kissed her rosy lips. She sat upright, and both gazed long into each other's eyes, feeling such happiness as they had never known.

Now the miller and his wife came up to the pair, joined their hands, and said : " This is your bride, destined for you, brave man ! You have freed us all from the spell. We were in evil courses ; we will begin a new life." Father, mother, and daughter hung with tears of joy on their deliverer's neck.

Thus were Hans and the beauteous miller's maid betrothed bride and bridegroom, and all went in great joy back to the Forest Mill. The miller, formerly so slothful, became an industrious man ; his niggardly wife an open-handed, hospitable dame ; the maid never stole again in her life ; and the snappish miller's man was changed into a peaceable fellow. The miller soon built a new mill beside the old one, and they who there led the happiest life in the world were no other than Hans Quakenberger and his wife.

R. Reinich.

IN THE DUCK-YARD.

A DUCK arrived from Portugal. Some said she came from Spain, but that's all the same. At any rate, she was called the Portugese, and laid eggs, and was killed and cooked, and that was *her* career. But the ducklings which crept forth from her eggs were afterwards also called Portuguese, and there is something in that. Now, of the whole family there was only one left in the duck-yard, a yard to which the chickens had access likewise, and where the cock strutted about in a very aggressive manner.

"He annoys me with his loud crowing!" observed the Portuguese Duck. "But he's a handsome bird—there's no denying that, though he is not a drake. He ought to moderate his voice, but that's an art that only goes with polite education, like that possessed by the little singing-birds over in the lime-trees in the neighbour's garden. How charmingly they sing! There's something quite pretty in their warbling. I call it Portugal. If I had

only such a little singing-bird I'd be a mother to him, kind and good, for that's in my blood, my Portuguese blood."

And while she was still speaking a little Singing-Bird came head over heels from the roof into the yard. The cat was behind him, but the bird escaped with a broken wing, and that is how he came tumbling into the yard.

"That's just like the cat; she's a villain!" said the Portuguese Duck. "I remember her ways when I had children of my own. That such a creature should be allowed to live, and to wander about upon the roofs! I don't think they do such things in Portugal!"

"The cat was behind him."

And she pitied the little Singing-Bird, and the other ducks who were not of Portuguese descent pitied him too.

"Poor little creature!" they said, as one after another came up. "We certainly can't sing," they said, "but we have a sounding-board, or something of the kind, within us; we can feel that, though we don't talk of it."

"But I can talk of it," said the Portuguese Duck, "and I'll do something for the little fellow, for that's my duty!" And she stepped into the water-trough, and beat her wings upon the water-trough so heartily that the little Singing-Bird was almost drowned by the bath he got; but the Duck meant it kindly. "That's a good deed," she said; "the others may take example by it."

"Peep!" said the little bird. One of his wings was

broken, and he found it difficult to shake himself; but he quite understood that the bath was kindly meant. "You are very kind-hearted, madam," he said; but he did not wish for a second bath.

"I have never thought about my heart," continued the Portuguese Duck, "but I know this much—that I love all my fellow-creatures except the cat; but nobody can expect me to love her, for she ate up two of my ducklings. But pray make yourself at home, for one can make oneself comfortable. I myself am from a strange country, as you may see from my bearing and from my feathery dress. My drake is a native of these parts; he is not of my race; but for all that I am not proud! If anyone here in the yard can understand you, I may assert that I am that person."

"She is quite full of Portulak," said a little common duck, who was witty, and all the other common ducks considered the word *Portulak* quite a good joke, for it sounded like Portugal, and they nudged each other, and said "Rapp!" It was too witty! And all the other ducks now began to notice the little Singing-Bird.

"The Portuguese has certainly a greater command of language," they said. "For our part we don't care to fill our beaks with such long words, but our sympathy is just as great. If we don't do anything for you, we march about with you everywhere, and we think that the best thing we can do."

"You have a lovely voice," said one of the oldest. "It must be a great satisfaction to be able to give so much pleasure. I certainly am no great judge of your song, and consequently I keep my beak shut, and even that is better than talking nonsense to you, as others do."

"Don't plague him so," interposed the Portuguese

Duck; "he requires rest and nursing. My little Singing-Bird, do you wish me to prepare another bath for you?"

"Oh no; pray let me be dry!" was the little bird's answer.

"The water cure is the only remedy for me when I am unwell," quoth the Portuguese. "Amusement is beneficial, too. The neighbouring fowls will soon come to pay their visit. There are two Cochin Chinese among them. They wear feathers on their legs, are well educated, and have been brought from afar; consequently, they stand higher than the others in my regard."

And the fowls came, and the cock came; to-day he was polite enough to abstain from being rude.

"You are a true Singing-Bird," he said, "and you do as much with your little voice as can possibly be done with it. But one requires a little more shrillness, that every hearer may hear that one is a male."

The two Chinese stood quite enchanted with the appearance of the Singing-Bird. He looked very much rumpled after his bath, so that he seemed to them to have quite the appearance of a little Cochin China fowl.

"He is charming!" they cried, and began a conversation with him, speaking in whispers, and using the most aristocratic Chinese dialect.

"We are of your race," they continued. "The ducks, even the Portuguese, are swimming-birds, as you cannot fail to have noticed. You do not know us yet; very few know us, or give themselves the trouble to make our acquaintance—not even any of the fowls, though we are born to occupy a higher grade on the ladder than most of the rest. But that does not disturb us; we quietly pursue our path amid the others, whose principles are certainly not ours, for we look at things on the favourable

side, and only speak of what is good, though it is difficult sometimes to find something when nothing exists. Except us two and the cock there is no one in the whole poultry-yard who is at once talented and polite. It cannot even be said of the inhabitants of the duck-yard.

"'We are of your race,' they continued."

We warn you, little Singing-Bird, don't trust that one yonder with the short tail-feathers, for she is cunning. The pied one there, with the crooked stripes on her wings, is a strife-seeker, and lets nobody have the last word, though she is always in the wrong. The fat duck yonder

speaks evil of everyone, and that is against our principles. If we have nothing good to tell we should hold our beaks. The Portuguese is the only one who has any education and with whom one can associate, but she is passionate, and talks too much about Portugal."

"I wonder what those two Chinese are always whispering to one another about?" whispered one duck to her friend. "They annoy me; we have never spoken to them."

Now the drake came up. He thought the little Singing-Bird was a sparrow.

"Well, I don't understand the difference," he said, "and, indeed, it's all the same thing. He is only a plaything, and if one has them, why, one has them."

"Don't attach any value to what he says," the Portuguese whispered. "He is very respectable in business matters, and with him business goes before everything. But now I shall lie down for a rest. One owes that to oneself, in order that one may be nice and fat when one is embalmed with sage and onions."

And accordingly she lay down in the sun, and winked with one eye, and she lay very comfortably, and she felt very comfortable, and she slept very comfortably.

The little Singing-Bird busied himself with his broken wing. At last he lay down, too, and pressed close to his protector. The sun shone warm and bright, and he had found a very good place.

But the neighbour's fowls were awake. They went about scratching up the earth, and, to tell the truth, they had paid the visit simply and solely to find food for themselves. The Chinese were the first to leave the duck-yard, and the other fowls soon followed them. The witty little duck said of the Portuguese that the old lady was

becoming a ducky dotard. At this the other ducks laughed and cackled aloud. "Ducky dotard!" they whispered. "That's too witty!" And then they repeated the former joke about Portulak, and declared that it was vastly amusing. And then they lay down.

They had been lying asleep for some time when suddenly something was thrown into the yard for them to eat. It came down with such a thwack that the whole company started up from sleep and clapped their wings. The Portuguese awoke, too, and threw herself over on the other side, pressing the little Singing-Bird very hard as she did so.

"Peep!" he cried. "You trod very hard upon me, madam!"

"Well, why do you lie in my way?" the Duck retorted. "You must not be so touchy. I have nerves of my own, but yet I never called out 'Peep!'"

"Don't be angry," said the little bird. "The 'Peep!' came out of my beak unawares."

The Portuguese did not listen to him, but began eating as fast as she could, and made a good meal. When this was ended and she lay down again, the little bird came up and wanted to be amiable, and sang:

"Tillee-lilly-lee!
Of the good springtime
I'll sing so fine,
As far away I flee!"

"Now I want to rest after my dinner," said the Portuguese. "You must conform to the rules of the house while you are here. I want to sleep now."

The little Singing-Bird was quite taken aback, for he had meant it kindly. When madam afterwards awoke, he stood before her again with a little corn that he had

found, and laid it at her feet; but as she had not slept well, she was naturally in a very bad humour.

"Give that to a chicken," she said, "and don't be always standing in my way!"

"Why are you angry with me?" replied the little Singing-Bird. "What have I done?"

"Done?" repeated the Portuguese Duck. "Your manner of talking is not exactly genteel—a fact to which I must call your attention."

"Yesterday it was sunshine here," said the little bird, "but to-day it is cloudy, and the air is close."

"You don't know much about the weather, I fancy," retorted the Portuguese. "The day is not done yet. Don't stand there looking so stupid!"

"But you are looking at me just as the wicked eyes looked when I fell into the yard yesterday."

"Impertinent creature!" exclaimed the Portuguese Duck. "Would you compare me with the cat, that beast of prey? There is not a drop of malicious blood in me. I have taken your part, and will teach you good manners." And so saying, she bit off the Singing-Bird's head, and he lay dead on the ground. "Now, what's the meaning of this?" she said. "Could he not bear even that? Then certainly he was not made for this world. I have been like a mother to him, I know that, for I've a good heart."

Then the neighbour's Cock stuck his head into the yard, and crowed with steam-engine power.

"You'll kill me with your crowing!" she cried. "It's all your fault. He's lost his head, and I'm very near losing mine."

"There's not much lying where he fell!" observed the Cock.

"Speak of him with respect," retorted the Portuguese Duck, "for he had song, manners, and education. He was affectionate and soft, and that's as good in animals as in your so-called human beings."

And all the ducks came crowding round the little dead Singing-Bird. Ducks have strong passions, whether they feel envy or pity; and as there was nothing here to envy, pity showed itself, even in the two Chinese.

"We shall never get such a Singing-Bird again: he was almost a Chinese," they whispered; and they wept with a mighty clucking sound, and all the fowls clucked too, but the ducks went about with the redder eyes.

"We have hearts of our own," they said. "Nobody can deny that."

"Hearts!" repeated the Portuguese. "Yes, that we have, almost as much as in Portugal."

"Let us think of getting something to satisfy our hunger," said the drake, "for that is the most important point. If one of our toys is broken, why, we have plenty more!"

Hans Christian Andersen.

HOW THE MICE GOT OUT OF TROUBLE.

THERE were once a little mouse and his wife. They were very unfortunate people, because there lived in the same house with them a great ugly cat, for which they were obliged every day to provide six little mice —three for his breakfast and three for his dinner. It was lucky for the poor mouse-couple that the cat went out in the evening, otherwise they would have been obliged to provide also three other little mice for his supper. But it was his custom at dusk to lick and clean himself, and put his long whiskers in fine order, to go into company with other cats, with whom he was often heard late in the night making music in the yard. On this account he did not require any supper, which was a good thing, for it was as much as the poor little mouse and his wife could do to provide six young mice a day—three, as I said, for breakfast and three

for dinner. One, two, three! he swallowed them like a mere mouthful, and then wiped his beard and lay down to sleep.

The poor old mouse and his wife made a sad lamentation in having to give up, day after day, their pretty little young ones. I assure you it almost ruined them. One day, therefore, after they had taken the cat the three little mice as usual, they sat down together, bitterly complaining and shedding many tears.

"Husband," said the little wife, "we cannot go on in this way, giving up six of our little ones to the cruel cat every day! Ah, I cry day and night about our poor children that are eaten up. Let us go and consult with somebody, and see if we cannot find a way of getting from under this hard necessity."

"Oh, my dear wife," said the old mouse in reply, "it makes me miserable. But what can we do? who will give us advice, or help us in our trouble?"

"I really do not know," replied the little wife; "but let us go and talk with our friends and neighbours; let us take counsel with them, and ask them to help us. There is our neighbour, the mastiff, for instance, who is not over-fond of the cat; and the old raven on the roof, so remarkable for his experience and great wisdom; and good Mrs. Hen, who lives in the yard. Perhaps some of these can hit upon a plan by which we may save the lives of our poor little ones."

The old mouse saw so much sense in the suggestion that they immediately set out to ask advice from their neighbours. They went in the first place to Mrs. Hen, and laid all their troubles before her, and then asked her advice as to what was the best way of relieving themselves from such a heavy misfortune.

When the hen heard the dismal history, and saw the wretched state to which it had reduced the poor little couple, she began to weep bitterly, because she was very sympathetic and tender-hearted; and she deplored the fate of the poor parents and their unfortunate offspring in such pathetic and melting words as made the old mouse and his wife weep all the more.

When the three had thus spent some time in tears, the old mouse dried his eyes, and thanking the hen for her sympathy, begged her to counsel them how they could best prevent their young from being devoured. To this the hen replied, amid continued sobs and tears:

"Your misfortunes go to my heart, but how you are to be helped is more than I know! Yet I will give you one piece of good advice—bear your troubles patiently; impatience only makes bad worse. Perhaps time may bring some alleviation to your misfortunes. It is possible that the cat may fall sick or die."

"And what good would that do?" replied the old mouse mournfully. "If the cat fell sick, he would only stop at home in the evening, and then we should be obliged to provide supper for him; and if he were to die, we should be no better off with his son and heir."

"Yes, truly," replied the hen mournfully; "it is a bad case, and I do not see what help there is for you. It *is* melancholy that your dear, pretty little children must be devoured by that ugly cat. Oh, if the same thing were to happen to me, it would break my heart! My young ones, it is true, are also eaten, but then they are cooked for the human table, which is quite another thing! I am a fortunate mother: my offspring *are cooked!*" and the hen now wept over her own good fortune.

When the poor old mice saw that neither help nor avail-

able counsel was to be looked for from the hen, they thanked her for her sympathy, and went on to the mastiff.

The mastiff was basking in the sun, and snapping at the flies which buzzed about him. The mice approached him, and having made a very low bow and curtsey, laid before him their trouble, and asked his advice. The mastiff had not so tender a heart as the hen, and having heard their story out, he made a short and surly reply. "Why," said he, "are you obliged to provide six young mice for that wretched fellow of a cat every day? Six mice! what a glutton the fellow must be! But why do you do it? it surely is your own fault. I should like to see the cat come to me and demand six young puppies to eat!"

"Ah, but," said the mouse, "you are a dog, and we are only mice!"

"Yes, that is just it," said the mastiff; "but then, what business have you to be mice? It's all your own fault!"

The mastiff spoke in such a loud, overpowering voice that the poor little couple stole away very little better for the consultation or advice which they had received from him. "What a rude fellow the mastiff is!" said the old mouse; "alas, for us poor creatures! there's no help for us; I fear we shall get no more good from the raven than we have done from the hen or the mastiff."

"Perhaps we may," said the little mouse-wife; "at least, we will go and see him; he has the character of being a wise counsellor."

With this, the mice climbed up the roof, on a visit to the raven, who was sitting on the ridge-tiles of the roof, with his long nose cocked up in the air, smelling about to discover if there was anything good for him to eat. The mice came before him, and having made a low bow and curtsey,

set before him all their troubles, and asked him to suggest some way by which they and their offspring might be relieved from the cat.

When the raven had heard the whole affair, he smiled and said : " My friend, the cat is no simpleton : young mice are excellent eating, and taste well either for breakfast or dinner."

These words filled the eyes of the poor mice with tears.

" Don't be troubled," said he, when he saw this ; " I will give you excellent advice. But I cannot proceed without my fee : good advice is worth paying for."

" Most certainly," replied the old mouse ; " we shall think nothing too much to pay for the saving of our young ones."

" Very good," said the raven, in a business-like way. " As I have just now remarked, young mice are good eating ; they are my favourite dish. My fee in this case will be a dozen young, tender, well-fed mice."

The old mouse and his wife began to lament most bitterly when they heard these words. " Dear sir," said the mouse, " how can you talk thus to us poor people ? We came to ask how we shall preserve our young from the cat, and now you yourself demand them !"

" I did not ask you to come to me," returned the raven ; " but whoever comes for my advice must of course pay for it. That is custom and right."

" Well, then," said the mouse, with a great sigh, " let us hear your advice, so that we may be able to judge whether it is worth the fee ; for it certainly would be better to make one sacrifice than to go on day after day feeding that great cat. So let us hear your advice."

" Not so fast, my good friend," says the raven ; " my

"The mice set before the raven all their troubles."

fee is always paid in advance. Bring me the little mice, and I will give you my advice."

On this the old couple laid their heads together, and considered the matter over, and the end was that, after a deal of bargaining, it was decided that for three little mice the raven should put them in a way of getting rid of this oppressive tax. Away they went therefore, and, returning with heavy hearts, delivered up the required fee.

The old raven ate and said: "Now you must consider well, and answer me correctly. Have you always, without any intermission, delivered up daily six little mice to the cat? Has he at no time eaten more or less than six little mice daily? Now, consider this very carefully, for it is upon this that the saving of your children depends."

"It does not require much consideration for us to reply to that question," said the old father-mouse. "During the winter the cat fell into a trap, which so much injured his paw that he could not move from the spot for several days. Therefore during that time we were obliged to provide him with three little mice every evening for his supper."

"Indeed!" said the raven, and laid his finger on his long nose; "let me think! how many nights did you say that the cat remained at home?"

"About a week," replied the mouse, "or it might be a day more."

"Hem! hem!" said the raven; "in this lies our strength. Now listen to me!"

The mice pricked up their ears full of expectation, and unwilling to lose a single word.

"You must bring an accusation against the cat, and demand that he restore to you every one of those mice

which he devoured for supper during the time he remained at home."

"But they are dead and eaten up!" said the mouse; "how can he restore them to us?"

"We have no intention of that sort," returned the raven, "but you must give this turn to the affair. The cat has evidently no right to nor claim upon any one of those little mice which he had for his supper; if he maintains that he has, then he must prove it. But he cannot do it, and to attempt it might throw a doubt upon any right which he has to demand your children. In any case demand from him that which he cannot fulfil—namely, the restoration of such young mice as he devoured for his suppers."

"The proposal is too difficult for us," said the mouse; "and would it not be much better if we were to require that he should devour no more of our offspring?"

"That would not do," replied the raven. "You cannot avoid for the present furnishing him with little mice for breakfast and dinner, but in a while, if he is unable or unwilling to restore alive those little mice which you say at one time he took for supper, then you can legally refuse to provide him with either breakfast or dinner until he has fulfilled his part. And as he never can fulfil his part, then are you freed from your part also in the compact. But until sentence shall be passed upon the cat to restore the young mice as aforesaid, you are bound to provide him with breakfast and dinner as hitherto."

On that the old mouse-wife began to lament. "Unfortunate that we are," said she, "if that is your advice! We are to demand the little mice from the cat, and are in the meantime to provide him with breakfast and dinner! Alas! alas! you have deceived us with your advice!"

"You are ignorant people, and understand nothing about the law," replied the raven. "It is as I tell you, and this is the only remedy."

"Tell us, then," said the mouse, "before whom shall we bring our case."

"The cat's judge is the master of the house. You must bring your complaint before him," replied the raven.

When the old mouse heard these words he could hardly contain himself. "Woe is ours," said he; "the master of the house will never judge impartially between us and the cat. He is very fond of the cat, and hates and persecutes us poor mice! Truly it will fare ill with us if we are to look to man for help against the cat!"

"To whom, then, would you accuse the cat if not to man?" demanded the raven angrily. "Man is the cat's master and judge, and it would be very disgraceful if he should take the cat's side out of friendship, and against law and justice."

"It would be so, nevertheless," replied the mouse sorrowfully; "neither would it trouble man at all to behave shamefully to us poor mice. He never would say a word against the cat if he ate up all our young ones and ourselves into the bargain."

"There is no other remedy for you," said the raven, shrugging his shoulders.

"You have deceived us with your counsel," said the mouse, in the utmost distress of mind; "you tell us to accuse the cat to his master, who will take his part through thick and thin; you tell us to require the restoration of our little mice, and yet to go on supplying him with breakfast and dinner. Oh, your advice is bad, and your proposal impossible!"

This made the raven very angry. "You are ungrateful people," said he, "and so ignorant as to be incapable of understanding law or reason. Begone with you!" And on this the poor little mouse-couple went their way very downhearted.

When they had gone into their mouse-hole they wept bitterly, and said: "Oh, we unfortunate wretches! There are none who can help us—neither the hen, nor the dog, nor the raven! Alas! alas!"

As they thus sat lamenting, they woke one of their children, a very pretty little mouse. He pricked up his tender ears, and opened wide his beautiful eyes, and when he saw his father and mother bitterly weeping, he sprang up and said: "Dearly beloved parents, what is amiss? What is it that troubles you so?"

With that the old folks opened their hearts to him, and told him how they were obliged to give up all their children to be devoured by the cat, and how vain they had found it to seek help either from friends or neighbours.

When the little mouse heard this he pondered awhile, and then asked: "But tell me, dear parents, why you must give up your children to the cat to be devoured?"

"My dear child," replied the mouse-father, "we must do it, because the cat will have it so."

Again asked the little mouse: "But why have you not refused to obey the cat's commands?"

"My child, you do not understand it," replied the father.

"Then explain it to me," said the little mouse.

"My child," said the mother, "we dare not oppose the commands of the cat."

Much more asked the little mouse, to which the parents replied. At length said the little mouse: "To-morrow

morning do not take the cat any breakfast, but let me go alone to him instead."

With this the parents began afresh to lament, and would not consent, because this was their favourite child. But nothing could turn the little mouse, and at length, by prayers and persuasions, the parents agreed.

"What could happen more to me than that the cat should eat me up?" said the little young mouse; "and if it did eat me, has not the same happened to my brothers and sisters, and what better am I than they?"

When the morning came, therefore, off he set to the cat's dwelling, but not before he had made full inquiries from his parents respecting the character and habits of the enemy. The parents accompanied him a short distance, and took leave with many tears.

The little mouse entered the cat's apartment with light and circumspect steps, and looked around to find a loophole to creep into in case of need. As soon, however, as the mouse beheld the cat, his heart was filled with anxiety and terror; but he called up all his courage, resolved to face the danger, and looked fixedly on the cat. The cat, who had been out late the night before, now lay curled round in a deep sleep, so that the little mouse was able to observe him undisturbed. But oh, what a horrible creature he was! He was larger and stronger than ordinary, and his fur was brown, striped and flecked with grey. After the little mouse had contemplated him for some time, the cat awoke, opened a pair of great fiery eyes, stretched his limbs, heaved up his back into a huge bow, and yawned; then he laid himself down again, stretched out his sharp claws, and wagged his long tail. When the little mouse saw his sharp claws, the large throat, the pointed tongue, and the many teeth, he began

afresh to tremble. The cat, however, closed his eyes, and laid himself down again to sleep. With that the little mouse called up all his courage, and stepping cautiously forward, made a beautiful bow, and said in a loud voice:

"Most high and mighty Lord Cat!"

The cat, on hearing these words, supposed that it was one of the little mice that had been brought for his breakfast; therefore he raised himself up to take it. The little mouse, however, said a second time: "Most high and mighty Lord Cat!" The cat, who only saw *one* mouse instead of *three*, as he expected, spoke in a quick, tart manner: "What's this? how's this? only *one* mouse instead of *three!* Am I to wait for my breakfast?"

"By all means, most high and mighty Lord Cat!" replied the mouse; "by all means will you have to wait, not only to-day, but every day from this time, not only for your breakfast, but for your dinner also!"

The cat pricked up his ears, and stared with all his eyes. "What is the lazy thing talking of?" said he; "come nearer, and let me eat you up!"

But the little mouse, instead of going nearer, slipped back into the loophole that he had noticed beforehand, and then said: "I am brother to the mice that you have already eaten up, and therefore I shall not come nearer."

"I won't eat you up," said the cat, in a terrible rage.

But the rage of the cat only made the little mouse more determined. "Of a truth, my Lord Cat," said he, "I will not be eaten up; nor from this time forth will my parents give you either your breakfast or your dinner."

"You are an impudent fellow," said the cat, "and deserve a severe punishment; but I will behave nobly, and forgive you this time on condition that you behave better for the future;" and with these words the cat made a

sudden spring at him, but he was on his guard, and slid into a safe corner of the hole.

"You give yourself needless trouble, my Lord Cat," said he; "you will neither catch me nor eat me! I advise you to give up your liking for mice!"

The cat, when he saw that he had failed in his attempt, withdrew to his place, and said very mildly: "Only come out, little fellow, and I won't do you any harm!"

"No, my Lord Cat," replied the mouse; "I am very well off where I am."

"My child," replied the cat, in a still milder voice, "you are under some great mistake, and your excellent parents have been misguided by artful, bad people, who have excited them. Probably the raven has been exciting their minds, or my old enemy the dog."

"You are mistaken, my Lord Cat," replied the little mouse; "we have not been misguided, nor yet have our minds been excited; it is our own private determination. We do not mean any longer to let ourselves be eaten up by you."

"But it is your duty," returned the cat, "to let yourselves be eaten up, just as it is my duty to eat you up. For centuries have my ancestors eaten mice, and my right is well founded."

"With permission, my Lord Cat," said the little mouse, "if our ancestors allowed themselves to be devoured by you, we are now grown wiser."

"You are stupid, ignorant people," said the cat, "and cannot see that what I do to you is for your good. You do not understand what is best for yourselves."

"No, my Lord Cat," returned the little mouse, "we cannot see that it is best for us! Good-bye to you! and from henceforth you may look elsewhere for your meals!"

"You are an unthankful generation," said the cat; "day and night I have wearied myself with caring for your advantage, and now you treat me in this undutiful manner! I have not deserved it from you!"

"Ah, well," returned the mouse, "it will be all the better for you if we relieve you of all this anxiety. We will look after our own affairs ourselves. Good-bye to you!"

When the cat saw that it really was an earnest matter, he thought it would be better to touch another string, and therefore he said: "My friend, let us talk rationally on this matter; we will enter into an arrangement. I, of course, only desire that which is best for you, and I am therefore willing to yield up a portion of my well-grounded right. I will from henceforth be satisfied with three little mice daily, instead of six, and that is really a great sacrifice on my part."

"No, my lord," said the little mouse, "you will not get even a single mouse now! Good-bye to you!"

With that the cat was very angry. "Rebellious rabble!" exclaimed he, "I withdraw my protection. Begone! and see how you will get on without me."

The little mouse laughed, and ran off to his parents, who were in the most dreadful anxiety about him. But when they saw that he was come back safe and sound, and heard what had taken place between him and the cat, they were delighted and jumped for joy.

From that time forth, whenever the cat would eat a mouse, he is obliged to catch it for himself.

Mary Howitt.

WISE COCKSCOMB.

THERE once lived in a farmyard an old cock, whose name was Crowell, together with his wife, a venerable hen named Peckall. Of their numerous family, nearly all of whom had been successively eaten by their master and mistress, only two chickens now remained. Both were lively young blades, bold, vain, and quarrelsome, as young cocks generally are; but Cockscomb, the eldest, was no conjurer, while his brother, Cockspur, was certainly somewhat wiser than he. They would peck each other once or twice a day, because amongst chickens that forms a part of a polite education.

Now, there happened to live in the same farmyard a red-haired dog called Cæsar, who was so good-natured that he never hurt any of the fowls—nay, he would often

leave them titbits out of his own dinner, so that they all loved him dearly.

One morning Cockscomb was walking alone in a pensive mood in the large garden behind the house. He sauntered on till he came to a manure-heap, which he knew lay at the farther end of the garden, close to some wooden palings, the top of which he could reach from it, though there was no convenient mound to get down by on the other side; and when he reached the top of this fence, he felt proud and majestic indeed, as he crowed aloud, and overlooked the wide fields.

While he was busy scratching about and crowing, he perceived Master Reynard lying in wait behind the palings, and stirring neither of his four feet, but gazing intently at the water. Now, Cockscomb had often heard of a wicked robber of chickens, but had never seen one, and as the fox was red-haired and somewhat resembled a dog, he cried out: "I say, you there! are you not a brother of our Cæsar?"

The fox, who long ago had scented the dainty young chicken up above, remained quite still, as if he had heard nothing.

"I say, you there! are you not a brother of our Cæsar?" cried the young chick twice more, in a still louder voice.

"Why, as I'm alive, there's my darling Cockscomb's own little self!" exclaimed the cunning fox, now raising his head for the first time. "How glad am I to meet you at last, you sweet little fellow! Yes, sure enough, I am Cæsar's brother, and many is the time he has told me all about you and your brother, and how prettily you both of you can crow. You can't think how delighted I should be to hear you; only unfortunately I have a cold

just now, which makes me rather hard of hearing. But I should be pleased if you would fly over the palings and crow close to my ear."

"I can't come," said Cockscomb sadly, for his vanity was very much tickled by the fox's flattery.

"The fox remained quite still as if he had heard nothing."

"What a pity!" quoth Master Reynard; "for I wanted to request another favour of you. My doctor has advised me to apply earth-worms to my ears to cure my

deafness, and I came here to fetch some, only I can't well pick them up. I wish I had your bill."

"Earth-worms!" cried Cockscomb eagerly; "are there really good fat ones down there?"

"I should think there were!" answered the fox. "Why, boy, there are a host of them, as fat as eels, crawling about by the water's edge. I never in my life saw so many gathered together."

When Cockscomb heard this enticing account, he could resist no longer, and he raised his wings to fly over the palings down to the fox, for he thought fat earth-worms the daintiest fare in the world. But, alas! his efforts proved vain; for it was but the day before that the cook had clipped his wings, in order that he might not fly about everywhere.

He told his sorrows to the fox. Reynard was beginning to explain how he might manage to get out of the garden and come to him, when some human voices were heard near at hand. The fox, therefore, had only just time to cry out hastily to Cockscomb, "Come again to-morrow, my sweet Cockscomb, and bring your brother Cockspur with you, and then we can all talk together. Will you?" And thereupon he ran away as fast as he could.

Cockscomb returned to the farmyard very much out of spirits, and could not, for the life of him, get rid of the thoughts of the dainty breakfast the fox had mentioned.

On reaching home he told his parents what had happened, and, according to his description, the old couple never doubted but that his deaf acquaintance was really a dog.

"I say, good man," quoth Mistress Peckall to the cock, "suppose we all go to-morrow morning, at the same

hour, to the spot where the earth-worms are to be found? It is a long time since we have eaten any, and they are the nicest things one can feed on."

"Very well, mother," replied old Crowell; "nothing hinders our going, only I should like to have taken our dear children with us, and, unfortunately, their wings were clipped yesterday."

"Leave me to manage that," said the hen. "I know of a hole under the garden fence, which, with a little scratching, can easily be made wide enough for the children to go through. Shall we go?"

"By all means," cried Crowell; and the whole family rejoiced at the prospect of their breakfast.

The next morning the hen-house was no sooner opened than the old couple sallied forth with their children, and went into the garden. The hole under the fence was quickly found. Good Mistress Peckall scratched away till she soon made it large enough for them all to slip through, and on they went, half running and half flying, till they reached the stream near which the fox was lying the day before. They looked about, and scratched, but all in vain, for no earth-worms were to be found. The father and sons were at length so tired that they gave up seeking any further; the hen alone kept turning up the soil in the hope of obtaining the wished-for breakfast of earth-worms.

"Don't give yourself any more trouble, mother," cried Cockspur, glancing angrily at his brother; "probably Cockscomb has been made a fool of by some vagabond dog, or perhaps by our enemy, Master Reynard himself. It would be like Cockscomb's wisdom."

"What do you mean by that, sir?" inquired Cockscomb, turning sharply round upon his brother.

"I mean," replied Cockspur, "that you are a foolish fellow."

"A foolish fellow, quotha!" exclaimed the other; "you have insulted me, brother! We must fight."

"They stood with their heads down."

"Bills or spurs?" inquired Cockspur shortly.

"Both," answered the offended Cockscomb.

"Then have at you!" cried the challenged one; and the combatants drew themselves up in front of each other.

Mistress Peckall wanted to separate her sons, but old Crowell said: "Let them fight it out, mother. Cocks will be cocks; and when I was young, I did just the same with my brothers."

So the quarrelsome youngsters fought after the most approved fashion among fowls. For the first few minutes they stood with their heads down and their ruffs and tails erect; then they scratched up the sand with great fury, and, lastly, flew at each other, and laid about them with both bills and spurs as hard as they could. They fought several rounds in this manner. Both displayed equal courage, although the youngest was stronger than his brother, and at length he hit poor Cockscomb so sharply that the latter fell down on the grass, and owned himself vanquished.

"They laid about them with both bills and spurs."

A rustling was now suddenly heard in the bushes close by.

"A fox! A fox!" exclaimed the old cock, with a loud cry, while he and the hen and the victorious young cock scrambled away over thistles, thorns, and stones as fast as ever they could go. But poor Cockscomb, being exhausted with the fight, and unable to run as quickly as the others, fell a prey to the cunning fox, who caught him by the neck and killed him without mercy.

That is the way with fowls. So long as eating or fighting are the order of the day, a cock is quite ready to play his part, and pecks about him most bravely. But when the case requires him to help others out of some great danger, then he takes himself off, and leaves his children or his brothers in the lurch.

And now I will tell you how it fared with Master Reynard.

The cock and hen related their misfortune to the farmyard dog, and he in turn told his master, who laid a trap near the hole in the garden hedge through which the fowls had escaped. At night the wily robber crept towards the spot, intending to cross the garden and reach the farmyard, and then break into the hen-house; for he thought his dear Cockspur would make him a most delicate supper.

This time, however, the cunning schemer made a mistake in his reckoning: he himself was caught in the trap, and was knocked on the head and killed, and his skin was made into a cap, that may be seen at the furrier's.

But where the furrier lives we are sorry to say we have forgotten.

R. Reinecke.

I

The Complaint against Reynard

THE month of June was at its height when Lion, the King of all the Beasts, held his Court in the woods, and bade all his subjects come before him to give account of themselves and of their doings. The trees were gay with leaf and blossom, and the ground was carpeted with many-coloured flowers; the air was sweet with their scent, and all the woods re-echoed with the merry songs of the birds. The King's heralds, the Swallows, dressed in their livery of black and white, with a band of royal red at the throat, went out into all corners of his realm to call the Beasts to Court.

The King's subjects came hurrying in answer to the summons. Great and small they came, walking and

creeping, leaping and climbing, each after his wont. Some came by the highways in the trees, others by the forest paths; some crept by hidden ways among the moss and fern, and others flew above in the wide air. Bruin, the great Bear, came from his cave, and the grey Wolf, Isegrim, from his lair in the rocks. From their homes in farmyard and pasture-lands, meadow and forest, valley and high hill, came Grimbart the Badger, Tybert the Cat, Curtis the little Hound, Tisellin the Raven, the gentle Hare, called Kyward, Bellin the Ram, and Chanticleer, the brave Cock, who is the Beasts' bellman and cries the hours. Besides all these were others whose names are too many to tell. But one Beast was absent, and that was Reynard the Fox. There were few among all who came who had not some complaint against Reynard, and he dared not show his face at Court.

When the subjects of King Lion had taken their places all in proper order before the throne, the grey Wolf Isegrim, attended by the chief Wolves of his tribe, came forward, and stood before the King with these words:

"Most great and mighty King, I bring you greeting from the Wolf tribes of all your lands. And I come to implore your Majesty's pity for the great and cruel wrongs that I and my wife and young children have suffered from that disloyal and evil subject of these realms, Reynard the Fox. Hear his ill deeds, most noble King! On a day when I hunted far away he came to my house, and forced his way within it, in spite of my wife's prayers and tears. There he beat my children sorely; and afterwards, when he was bidden to come before the judge for this offence, he laughed, and ran into his hole, in contempt of the laws of the land and of your Majesty. Therefore,

most gracious King, I pray you to send a command to Reynard the Fox to come and make confession of his sin and to suffer punishment for it. There are many here who will bear witness that I speak truly, and that the wrongs I and my wife and family have suffered are too many for me to tell them all. But the chief of them I have told, and I now entreat your Majesty to bring my enemy to justice, that all your subjects may know that such ill-doing receives the punishment it deserves."

Hardly had Isegrim the Wolf done speaking than Curtis the little Hound came pressing forward and stood before the throne.

"My Lord King," he cried, "I too have a complaint to make of this same Reynard. In the bitter cold of winter, when I was starving of hunger and had only one little pudding to eat, he came and seized it from me, though he had enough and plenty of his own. And it is no fault of Reynard the Fox that I am alive to tell the tale this day." So spoke Curtis, all trembling with eagerness, and would have said more had not the shrill voice of Tybert the Cat broken in upon his words.

"Your Majesty, we hear much talk of Reynard the Fox, but it would be well to inquire into the deeds of some of those persons who are so ready to accuse him of cruelty and wrong. That which Curtis complained of happened years ago, and might be forgotten by now. However, that is not my point, but this—that the pudding he lost was my pudding. I won it fairly from the miller when he lay asleep in his mill by night. Curtis was the thief in the first place, for he stole it from me. My tail grows thick and the fur on my back stands up when I hear such unjust complainings."

Then spoke the grave Panther, who was a cousin of

Tybert the Cat, and therefore privileged to correct his kinsman :

"Good cousin, you excite yourself unduly. If Curtis did wrong, that does not make the sin of Reynard the Fox less. None can make too great complaint of him. He is not only a thief, but also a liar and a murderous ruffian. He has no love nor pity for his fellows. So long as he had a fat hen for his dinner, he would not care if the King himself lost all his riches and honour. I will tell

"'I won the pudding fairly from the miller when he lay asleep.'"

you what I saw him do yesterday to Kyward the Hare, whom you all know for a gentle and peaceable subject of our lord the King. He took him by the long ears very tenderly, and talked to him of good things, and offered to teach him a hymn. And when he had drawn Kyward between his knees, and had him there fast, singing, he took hold of our poor friend by the throat, and would have choked the life out of him. It was then that I came

by, having heard their grave discourse and singing, just in time to deliver Kyward from his tormentor. My Lord King, if this Reynard goes unpunished for such evil deeds, there will soon be no safety in all your lands, and in the generations to come the subjects of your sons shall blame you for the dangers and sorrows of the kingdom. Therefore I beseech your Majesty to do justice upon Reynard the Fox."

"In truth, Panther, you speak wisely," said Isegrim. "There must be justice done upon all evil-doing if we are to live in safety and peace."

But Grimbart the Badger, who was Reynard's sister's son, spoke up angrily at these words.

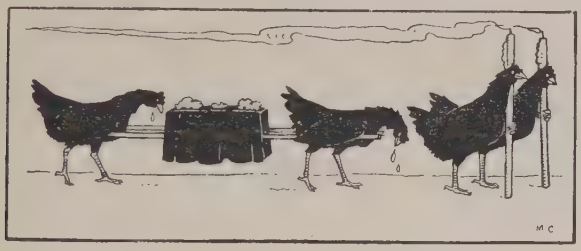
"Sir Isegrim, your speech is malicious. What business have you to abuse and to blame my uncle Reynard? Which of you two has done the more wrong to the other, I wonder? If that one were now to be hanged for his evil works, do you think you would be the one to go free? I tell you that if Reynard were here at Court and in the King's favour, making known your ill deeds, you would have to make more amends to him than but to ask his pardon. You have nipped my uncle with your cruel sharp teeth more often than I can tell, but one or two things I will ask you to remember of all your misdeeds towards him. Have you forgotten how you cheated him about the plaice he threw down from the cart that day when he climbed boldly upon it, and you, like a coward, dared not adventure yourself, but followed far behind and picked it up? It was his plaice that he won by courage and cleverness, but how much of it did you leave for him? I think the bones that you could not eat yourself were all his share. The flitch of fat bacon, too, that he took boldly, and for which he nearly lost his life—did

you not snatch it when the man to whom it first belonged was beating my poor uncle so that he had to let it go? And when you were both safely away, and my uncle asked you for his share, what did you answer? You smiled upon him, and said, 'Dear young friend, I will give it to you with all the pleasure in the world,' and then swallowed the last piece, and ran off laughing. My lords, I ask you, is this good conduct on the part of Sir Isegrim the Wolf? As for Kyward's complaint, that he dare not make himself, but sets Sir Isegrim to make for him, it is nonsense, and not worth considering. You all know that when scholars will not learn their masters must punish them; and if Reynard corrected the stupid Hare for his bad singing, it was no more than he deserved; and if he sing so badly again, I hope he will be punished for it again, for carelessness and wilfulness are sins as much as thieving is. Then Master Curtis comes whining over the loss of his pudding, saying he had worked so hard to find it, and making himself out to be so simple and well-behaved. He had better have held his tongue about it, for we now find that it was not his pudding at all, but the supper of poor neighbour Tybert, which he most wickedly stole. There is a good proverb that says, 'Set a thief to catch a thief.' My uncle was only a thief in reason, for he rescued the stolen pudding, and would no doubt have returned it to Tybert if he had known it was his property. You all know my uncle Reynard's high character, and that he is of noble birth; and such people as he must always seek to correct evil-doing and meanness. If he had hanged Curtis when he found him in the very act of this sin of theft, it would have been only the Hound's due. But my uncle has too much respect for the King's laws so to take justice into his own hands. It seems to

me that he deserves praise rather than blame in these matters. Yet what thanks has he had for so bravely upholding the law and the honour of our King? These unjust complaints must hurt my uncle very grievously, for he is a gentleman and honest. Deceit and meanness are horrible to him. He cannot stand by and see evil done, and take no steps to correct it. In all his deeds he acts only upon the advice of wise and good persons. And, further, I may tell you that since the King has proclaimed peace in all his lands, my uncle has done no violence to any man. He is almost a hermit, for he has left his great castle of Malepardus, and lives in a simple little dwelling, eating only one meal a day, and wearing clothes of the coarsest hair. It is more than a year since he has eaten any flesh. He does not even go hunting for his food, but lives humbly on the scraps that are given to him in charity, so that he has grown pale and thin. And he may be heard sighing and weeping very often, and repenting aloud of any evil he may have done in the days before peace was proclaimed. Is this the person you seek to punish, my lords? What do you think now of the wrongs of the Wolf, and the Hound, and the silly Hare who cannot sing two lines of a hymn without mistakes and false notes?"

With these words Grimbart ceased speaking, and as he turned again, bowing before the throne, to take his place among the other Beasts, there appeared a strange sight upon the hill facing the King's Court. Stepping slowly downhill, with every sign of grief, came Chanticleer the Cock, and behind him, carried upon a little bier, lay the dead body of his good wife, Dame Coppen, whose head had been bitten off by Reynard the Fox. On either side of the bier walked two sorrowful hens, the sisters of Dame

Coppen, whose names were Cantart and Crayant, and who were the fairest hens in all the lands of Lion the King. The hens wept aloud as they walked. "Alack for our dear sister! Alas for the fair Coppen!" so that it was piteous to see and hear their grief. The bier itself was carried by two young hens, the dead Coppen's daughters, and they also wept and cackled so loudly that the place was filled with their lamentations; and other hens walked sorrowfully with them. "Tuck-tuck-tuck-aw!" they



"The hens wept aloud as they walked."

cried in their beautiful language. "Our dear mother is dead!" It was indeed the saddest sight.

They came on and placed the bier before the King's throne, and stood round it weeping and clucking, while Chanticleer walked forward to make his complaint to the King. First he bowed low, and then he smote his hands together and rustled all his feathers very sorrowfully. Then he spoke and told the story of his sorrow.

"My lord the King," he said, "may it please your gracious Majesty to hear this tale of my great grief, and the ill deeds that Reynard the Fox has done to me, and to my dead wife, and to these my poor motherless children, and to all my sorrowing family. Only so little while ago as last April I was happy and proud. I come of a great

and noble family, and had a great and noble family of my own, as you shall hear. My wife had hatched out eight fine sons and seven fair daughters, and they were all strong and fat as any chickens could be. We lived in comfort and safety in a pleasant yard which was fenced in by walls, and in the yard was a shed, where six great dogs lived for our protection. So my children had no fear, but ran here and there, and were merry as the day was long. But that sly and wicked Fox, Reynard, envied me my fat children, all the more because the dogs were so fierce that he could have none of them. Often and often have I seen him creeping and peeping round the wall after us, and the dogs, finding him, have beaten him sorely and driven him away. Once when he came prowling, they leaped upon him and nearly destroyed him before he escaped from them. I saw his skin smoking from the desperate heat of battle as he fled. But he got safely away. Alas that it should be so! Thus for a little while we lived in peace, and saw no more of Reynard. Then he came again, disguised as a hermit of the woods, and brought with him a letter for me to read, sealed with the King's seal, and telling how the King had declared peace over all his lands, and forbidden all Beasts and Birds to do any harm to each other any more. He told me that he himself was now a humble hermit, and all his thoughts were how he could amend his past evil deeds. He showed me that he had put off his fine clothes, and wore old shoes and a frayed and battered suit of hair, and said to me: 'Sir Chanticleer, you need have no more fear, nor take any trouble to hide from me. I will eat no more flesh, but only berries and fruits and such things. I am growing old, and I wish my last years to be given over only to good deeds. I will bid you good-bye now, and leave

you, for I must not indulge in pleasant conversation.' So away he went, and lay down under a hawthorn tree, and I could hear him murmuring in a pious voice. Then I rejoiced indeed to be rid of all my fears. I ran off to my family and clucked them together, and took them outside

"Reynard disguised as a hermit."

the walls for a country walk. Alack, how I was deceived! As we walked, the children cheeping and chattering round us, Reynard came slyly creeping between us and the gate, and sprang among us, and seized one of my sons, and stuffed him in his wallet, and ran away. And since that

day things have been worse and worse. For, having once tasted one of my children, he must needs have another, and another, and his desire is so great to taste them that not even the dogs themselves can keep us in safety. By night and by day he comes hiding and pouncing, and has stolen so many of my children that out of all my fifteen I have only four left. Only yesterday was my poor Coppen rescued from his very mouth by the dogs, but too late, alas! to save her head. Your Majesty, I bring my sorrows to you. Have pity on me, and do me justice in this matter."

Thus weeping, Chanticleer told his piteous story, and the King spoke in answer:

"What do you think now of your uncle the hermit, Sir Grimbart? Are these the deeds of one who has given up hunting, and lives quietly on fruits and nuts, thinking only how to do good in the world? Sir Chanticleer, your complaint is a just one. First, we will bury your dame, who lies here, in a fair grave, and set up a stone above it; and her virtues shall be told, and all things done reverently and in good order. And when the burial is over, we will take counsel with all these lords and gentlemen, and consider how best to do you justice and to bring this wicked thief and murderer to punishment for his sins. It will be well for him to say prayers and sing hymns in good earnest now. I fear that those he has said and sung already are not greatly in his favour."

So they took the body of Coppen and laid it in a fair grave, and all things were done as they should be. Above the grave was laid a marble stone polished as clear as glass, and very beautiful, and on it were carved these words in large letters, that all might read: "Here lies Coppen, Dame of Sir Chanticleer, who was cruelly murdered by Reynard the Fox."

When this was done, the King sent for all his wisest counsellors, to take their advice about finding Reynard and bringing him to justice. After much talking they arranged it in this way—that someone should be sent as a King's messenger to find him, and should bid him come at once to Court, for the King had something to say to him. For if they should tell him the reason of the King's sending for him, they knew very well that not one messenger, nor two, nor more, would be able to bring him to justice. Bruin the Bear was chosen to take the King's message, and he was called before the throne to hear His Majesty's will.

"Sir Bruin," said the King to him, "out of all your fellows we have chosen you to go and find Reynard the Fox, because of your wisdom. This is an honour we do to you, so see that your part is done in all honour. And do not let fall a word about the reason of our sending, but only say that the King wills it so. And take heed yourself that Reynard does not deceive and escape you. He is a wicked fellow, and full of wiles, and may try to flatter you and lie to you, and, unless you are very careful and wise, will certainly do you some injury or make game of you in some way."

Then Bruin laughed and answered the King merrily: "Why, my Lord King, I am wise, and shall I be made a fool of by this Reynard? Trust me, I know my lesson better than Kyward knew his! Reynard may laugh at others, but he shall not make fun of me, I promise you!"

So Bruin the Bear made his bow to the throne, and went away cheerfully enough to find Reynard the Fox. But it remains to be seen whether he came back as merrily as he set forth.

II

The Bear's Errand

BRUIN set out on his journey with a stout heart, and no fear that he would fail in his quest, or be deceived by Reynard the Fox. Presently he came to a dark forest where he knew Reynard had a secret path, by which he escaped very often from those who sought to punish him for his evil tricks. Beside it was a high mountain, and many miles away, over this mountain, lay the castle of Malepardus, which was the finest of all the houses of Reynard the Fox. Reynard had many dwelling-places, but none of them was so safe as this one, and here he always fled when he had reason to believe that his enemies were seeking him, which was not seldom.

So Bruin went on his way to Malepardus, and after a long and weary journey, he arrived at the castle gates, and found them shut fast and barred. Then he sat down upon his tail, and shouted aloud: "Reynard! Are you at home? Let me in quickly. I am Bruin, your uncle. The King has sent me to you to bid you come to Court, to plead your cause and answer the complaints that are brought against you. He says if you do not come, as he orders, he will hang you, or kill you in some other way. I advise you to come, Nephew Reynard, for if you do your punishment may be small; but if you do not, you will most certainly be destroyed without mercy."

So Bruin, who thought himself so wise, in his first

speech with the Fox told him the reason of the King's message, and put him on his guard.

All this time Reynard was lying inside the gate enjoying the warmth of the sun, as he often did; but when he heard what his uncle had to say, he got up quietly and slipped into his hole, so as to think over the matter by himself, and consider his answer. For Malepardus was full of holes leading to hidden chambers in the rocks, one running out of another, with long crooked passages, so that there were many ways of escape if Reynard were pursued. He could go in at one hole, and along a passage, and take two or three turnings, and shut and fasten the door after him as he went, so that no one could find where he had gone, however fast they ran. Here he would hide in safety when he had brought home his prey, and knew that any other Beasts were on his track; and many a long chase had he given his poor neighbours, who went blundering along in the strange narrow passages, first this way and then that, while all the time Reynard was just round the corner laughing slyly in his sleeve.

Reynard hid himself within his castle for a while, and made his plans, and decided how he should persuade his uncle to believe him innocent. In a short time he came out to the gate and called his uncle in with greetings and great show of friendliness.

"Dear uncle," he cried, "welcome to my poor dwelling! I heard your voice a little while ago, and would have come to you, but I was saying my evening prayers, which are very long. Dear uncle, how weary you look! You owe him no thanks who sent you on such a long and dangerous journey. I can see you are tired out, and your fur is all wet with the heat you are in. And all to no purpose, for I was coming to Court to-morrow! However, I am the

gainer, for I shall have you to bear me company when I go there, and you will give me your wise advice, and tell me what to say to my accusers. But I pity you, dearest uncle. Could not the King have found some more lowly messenger to send on such a business? It is very strange he should treat you so, for next to him you are the greatest noble in all the land. I wish we were at Court now, but, alas! for once in a way I have had a good dinner, and because it was such a treat to me, and the meat so new and fresh, I ate so much that I really think it would not be good for me to walk."

"Dear nephew," said Bruin, quite deceived by this simple and affectionate speech, "what meat have you eaten?"

Now Reynard knew very well his uncle's love for honey, and he had his answer all ready for this question.

"Dear uncle," said he, "what does it matter what I ate, and why are you interested in my greediness, for which I am grieved when I think of it? Alas! how often we do wrong, and repent too late! It was but simple food. A poor fox is no lord, as you know, Uncle Bruin Bear. We humble folk must take what we can get, and be thankful for much that we would not look at except with disgust if we had a better choice before us. They were great honeycombs that I found, and being starving, I ate of them until I feel ill."

"Reynard, good nephew!" cried Bruin in amazement, "how can you speak so of honey? Do you think so little of that which is the most delicate and rare of all food in the world? My beloved nephew, if you will help me to find such stores of honey as you speak of, I will be your true friend as long as ever I live, and do everything in my power to help you. Only show me where

"'*Dear uncle,' cried Reynard, 'welcome to my poor dwelling.*'"

this honey is, and there is nothing I will not do for you!"

"Dear uncle," replied Reynard, "what are you saying? Would you make fun of me because I was forced to eat bees' food?"

"Nay, Reynard, nay," cried Bruin the Bear; "indeed I would not laugh at you. It is true that I love the good honey better than all other meat in the world, and I beg you to show me where it lies."

"Then, uncle," said Reynard, "if this is true, and you are in earnest, and love honey so dearly, I will willingly be of service to you. If you will give me your friendship and good counsel, I can let you have so much of this stuff that ten of you could not eat it at one meal."

"Ten of us, Nephew Reynard," cried Bruin, with much eagerness. "Indeed, I hope that may never be! If you gave me all the honey that is between this and Portugal, I would eat every bit of it alone! Do not speak of others sharing it with me; I could not bear such a thing."

"Well, uncle," said Reynard, "I will tell you all about it. A farmer called Lanfert lives near by, who has so much honey that if you ate nothing else for seven years you would not be able to finish it all. If you will help me against my enemies at the King's Court, you shall have every bit of it all to yourself."

"I will indeed be your friend and faithful adviser, dear Reynard," answered his uncle solemnly, "if you will but show me where this splendid treasure is to be found."

His uncle's grave words made sly Reynard laugh aloud to think how easily he had deceived the poor Bear.

"If you want seven tons of honey, Uncle Bruin," cried he, "I will get them for you, or seventy tons, for that matter!"

This merry jest so pleased Bruin that he rolled about with laughter until he could scarcely keep upon his feet.

"Aha!" thought Reynard. "This is fun indeed. I shall soon give him something to laugh at in earnest." But aloud he said: "Well, uncle, we must not delay. I do not mind a little trouble in your service. Though I suffer from my own greed, I will come with you, but there is no other person in the world for whom I would do so much. You may tell from this how much respect and true love I have for you."

"Many thanks, dear nephew," answered Bruin, with some impatience. "I do not need to be told so much of your goodwill towards me. Deeds are better than words, as we all know. This is the time for deeds, so let us be up and away as fast as may be. Who knows but somebody may have got before us and stolen the honey already?"

"You are right, good uncle," answered Reynard. "Let us be off, by all means. I will run as fast as I can, and you shall follow me. You shall have as much as you can bear, I promise you."

The Fox spoke of hard blows, but Bruin thought only of honey, and thought how much that would be, and hugged himself with joy.

Away they went, and ran so fast that they soon came to Farmer Lanfert's yard. There Bruin laughed again, so that he held his fat sides, he was so full of delight. Farmer Lanfert was a carpenter as well as a farmer, and in his yard lay a great oak-tree which had been felled the day before. He had begun to cleave it open, and had left two big wedges stuck in it to keep the two sides apart. At this sight Reynard laughed as merrily as his uncle,

for he saw that all was as he wished, and he would soon have Bruin in a trap.

"Make haste, uncle," said he. "In this tree is the honey I told you of. Fall to and make your meal, but I beg you not to overeat yourself. They are good sweet honeycombs, if you do not eat too many of them. Pray be careful, for if they make you ill I shall be blamed, dearest uncle."

"Never fear, nephew. I am not so foolish as all that. When I have had enough I shall take no more."

"Enough is as good as a feast," said Reynard. "You speak very truly. What should I fear? Go to the end and creep into the tree."

Bruin made all haste to do as he was told, sniffing eagerly for the honey. He put his fore-paws and then his head into the cleft of the tree. No sooner were they inside than Reynard sprang lightly forward, and pulled the wedge out, so that the two sides came together, and the Bear was held prisoner by the neck. Neither scolding nor begging could help him then. He was held fast within the tree-trunk, and all his struggling and crying could not set him free. His great strength was of no use while his paws and head were held as in a vice; and seeing how he had been deceived, he set up such a howling and roaring that the whole country-side echoed with his cries. Out came Lanfert, running with all haste to see what the noise might be, with a great stick in his hand. Reynard, safely hidden at a little distance, saw him come, and now was his turn to laugh long and merrily.

"Uncle, dear uncle!" cried he, when he could speak for laughing, "is the honey good? Have you found it yet? Do not eat too much, I beg you, lest it should do you harm. Remember we are going to Court to-morrow.

When Lanfert comes he can give you something to drink. It is thirsty work eating honey, and makes the throat dry!"

With these words Reynard ran off, full of merriment, towards Malepardus, and Lanfert came up and found the Bear fast caught in the tree.

"Heaven preserve us!" cried he. "What do I see? Neighbour, neighbour, come and help me. There is a bear in my yard!"

Crying and running, the farmer roused all the neighbours on his land, who came as fast as their legs would carry them, everyone armed with some weapon or other. Some carried brooms, some rakes, some crooks; others had stout sticks, and thrashing-flails, and reaping-hooks. The parson had his staff, and the clerk a weather-vane. The parson's wife came from her spinning-wheel carrying her distaff. Young and old, men, women, and children, came running, among them tiny mites who could only toddle and old people so stiff that they had not run for years.

Alas for poor Sir Bruin! His greed had brought him to a sad plight. When he heard the noise of all the people running and shouting he was filled with fear, and began to struggle and pull so hard that at last he got both his head and paws free. But so tightly was he caught that he left his gloves, and his fur hood, and two ear-caps behind him. There he sat, maddened by the wounds, and with such sore feet that he could hardly move.

"Alack and alack!" he moaned and cried, "I am caught, and shall never escape! Oh, woe is me! Alas! alas!"

The parson was the first to come up, but all the parish were upon his heels, and then began such a whacking and

shouting, such a groaning and roaring, as never was heard before. Everyone had a blow at the poor Bear, who at every stroke cried and roared the louder, whether it hurt greatly or not, as most people do when they are beaten. Everyone in the parish was there, but Lanfert himself shouted louder than all, for he was a proud man, and was glad of a chance to show the people how brave and strong he was. His father was Marcob the Steeple-maker, and Dame Podge of Casport was his mother, both well-to-do people, and Master Lanfert was vain of his good birth, and ever ready to come forward and make a noise before his neighbours, and prove himself a greater man than they.

But this could not go on for ever, and after the worst blow of all—a stroke on the head with a staff swung by Lanfert's brother—Bruin made one great effort, and sprang among the people so fiercely that he knocked the wives over, and they rolled into the river near by. Then a new shouting and crying began, and the Bear was forgotten while every man rushed to save his wife.

Bruin was left lying on his back, but, once free from his enemies, he did not stay there very long. Into the water he sprang, and swam down the stream as fast as he could go. When the parson saw him, he set up a great shouting after him to come back and be beaten, as he deserved ; but Bruin took no more notice of this command than to swim faster away.

"I have had enough beating for to-day, thank you," thought he. "Would I had never heard of that honey-tree, where I have left my hood and ears. Ah, Master Fox, I owe this to you ! A pretty friend you shall find me, I promise you !"

Thinking these angry thoughts, he struggled on for

two or three miles, and was then so weary that he had to climb out on to the river-bank and lie down to rest. As he lay there he groaned and growled, and abused his nephew for bringing him to such a pass. Meanwhile Reynard the Fox, before he made his escape from Lanfert's yard, had taken one of the farmer's fattest hens, and put her in his wallet. Then he made off hastily by a little path where he knew he would meet no one towards the river. As he ran, though he was hot and weary, he laughed and chuckled without ceasing, and was so full of joy that he did not know what to do, thinking the Bear must surely be dead by this time.

"Aha, Uncle Bear!" said he, "now I am safe! How cleverly I have managed this business! If ever I had an enemy at Court, it was Bruin, and a nice tale of evil deeds he would have told them if we had gone there together. Well, he is dead now, and cannot speak against me. Nobody knows how it happened, so I shall get no blame for it. Have I not good reason to rejoice and be merry?" And he chuckled and laughed the more as he ran, until he came in sight of the river.

What a sight met his eyes! There upon the bank lay the very Bear whom he thought was dead. All Reynard's merriment was turned to anger. "What a fool that farmer is!" cried he, "to lose such a chance! There is no food so rich and good as Bears' steaks, and there it lay to his hand, and he has let it escape. Oh, the silly blundering creature! May he never eat a good dinner again!"

Grumbling and muttering in this way, he reached the river-side, and drew near to poor Bruin, who lay sorely wounded and wearied, and with a heart full of anger towards his nephew.

"Welcome, good gentleman!" Reynard cried scornfully. "I hope you are feeling comfortable?"

"Ah," thought Bruin, "this is my cruel, crafty nephew is it?" but he did not answer.

"Have you forgotten anything at Lanfert's?" went on the Fox. "Have you paid him in full for the honeycombs you stole from him? If you have not, it is a great shame, and very dishonest behaviour on your part. I would rather be your messenger and take payment to him for you than let him go unpaid. Was not the honey good? I know where there is more of the same kind. Dear uncle, do tell me why you are wearing such a strange new hood? The barber who shaved you has nipped off your ears, I see. And your gloves are gone, too! Tell me what it all means!"

Bruin heard the Fox's remarks, and grew more angry every moment; but he was too weary to answer him or to fight him, so he made no answer, but rose up stiffly, and let himself down again into the river, and swam away to the far bank. There he sat and rested awhile, and then rose again and scrambled along in misery and suffering through the wood. So torn and wounded was he that when he drew near to the Court at last, many who saw him coming wondered what this strange Beast might be.

The King was the first to know him. "This is my good friend Bruin the Bear!" he cried, very much dismayed. "What terrible adventures has he had? Who has wounded him so sorely? Surely he is nearly killed. Where can he have been?"

By this time Bruin had reached the King's throne, and began his pitiful story in these words: "Merciful lord and King, I come to make a bitter complaint against

that cruel Fox Reynard. See how he has treated me. I pray you to punish him, for I have got all these grievous wounds in your service. My gloves, my hood, and my ear-caps are lost for ever, and I am nearly killed through his false deceit and wickedness."

"Bruin, poor friend," replied the King, in hot anger and pity, "I swear to you by my royal crown that I will punish that wicked traitor as he deserves. How dare he so treat my messengers? Come, all my counsellors, we must consider how to bring this fellow to justice and punishment."

Then all the wisest Beasts came and took counsel with the King how Reynard the Fox should be brought to trial for this and all his other sins. They talked long and earnestly, and at last they chose Tybert the Cat to go and fetch him.

"Tybert is wise and sensible," said they: "let him go and fetch this traitor to justice."

"You are right, sirs," answered the King; "I will take your advice. Come hither, Sir Tybert, and hear my will. You are to go to Reynard, and say to him a second time that I bid him come to Court to take his trial. He is cruel to other Beasts, but he trusts you and thinks well of you, and will take your advice, I have no doubt. Tell him that if he does not come he shall have a third and last warning; and if he still refuses to come after that, we shall show no mercy to him, nor to all his tribe. Let him take this chance we give him to defend himself against his accusers, or it will be the worse for him hereafter."

"My Lord King," Tybert made answer, "those who have counselled you thus are no friends of mine. Of what use would it be to send me on such an errand? Reynard will not listen to me, nor take any notice of what

I say. Dear lord, I beg you to send someone else to fetch him. I am little and weak. Bruin the Bear, who is big and strong, could not bring him. How can I take in hand what he has failed to do?"

"Nay, Sir Tybert," said the King, "it does not matter that you are small. Many of the wisest are small in size, and there are big and strong persons who have little wisdom. You are not great, but you are wise, and craft and cunning will serve you better than strength in this matter."

"Your Majesty," said Tybert, "if you bid me, I must obey. I bow to the King's will. Let us hope I may be able to do what you bid me. But I greatly fear that I shall fare worse in this adventure than the Bear has, who is both strong and wise."

III

The Cat's Errand

TYBERT was soon ready to start upon his journey to Malepardus. He had not gone far when he saw a swallow flying by. "Welcome, gentle bird!" he called to it; "turn round and fly on my right side, and bring me good luck."

But the bird, having no good cause for doing what Tybert told him, and, moreover, several reasons for distrusting such advice, went and sat in a tree on the Cat's left side.

Tybert was vexed and put out at this, for he was a great believer in signs, and he now thought that the swallow

had brought a warning to him that he would not meet with success on his journey.

"Alas!" he said to himself, "I thought it would be no use my going with this message, and here is a sign that I was right. Here is the King's Herald himself to prove it. Nevertheless, I have given my word to the King, so that I cannot turn back." And he went on with a heavy heart.

It did not take him very long to reach Malepardus, for he went very swiftly through the woods, being small and active. When he arrived at the Fox's castle, he saw Reynard himself standing alone before the door. Then he trembled afresh, and his wisdom forsook him.

"Good-evening, Reynard," said he; "I greet you, and wish you well. The King says he will be the death of you if you do not come with me to Court."

"Tybert, my dear cousin," answered Reynard, "you are very welcome indeed. I wish you all the good in the world." Reynard did not feel the friendliness he showed, as you shall see before very long, but he thought it wise to begin on good terms.

"Come, you shall be my visitor, Cousin Cat," he went on; "you shall stay with me to-night. I will treat you to the best I have, and to-morrow, early in the morning, we will go to Court together. Dear cousin, I hope you agree to this? I have no relation whom I love and trust as I do you. As for Bruin the Bear, he is a traitor. He was so strong and looked so shrewdly at me, that I would not have gone with him for anything you could give me. But you are a very different person. I will gladly go with you to-morrow if you will stay here for the night."

"I think we had better go now," said Tybert, in some

fear. "The moon is so bright that it is as light as day: I never saw more lovely weather."

"Nay, cousin," said Reynard; "it is not wise to walk by night. People may suspect us of evil doings. And Beasts who would be friendly enough to us by day might do us harm if they met us by night in the forest. Stay with me to-night, and to-morrow we will go to Court."

"What shall we have to eat if we stay?" asked Master Tybert, who was hungry after his walk.

"Indeed, there is very little here," answered Reynard. "The best I have is a honeycomb. Will you have some of that, dear cousin? It is very good and sweet."

"A honeycomb is no food to me, Reynard," replied Tybert. "Have you nothing else? If you give me a good fat mouse, I shall be contented."

"Dearest cousin," cried Reynard, "what next, I wonder? A fat mouse? Why, the parson who lives near by has a barn so full of them that a man could not carry them all away upon a waggon! Many and many a time have I heard him complaining of all the harm they do to his stores."

"Oh, Reynard," said Tybert, all trembling with eagerness, "if you will show me where this barn is, I will do anything in the world for you!"

"Is this true, Tybert?" asked Reynard. "Are you really so fond of mice, or are you laughing at my poor offers?"

"Fond of them?" cried Tybert. "You ask me if I am fond of mice? Listen, Reynard: I love them better than anything else in the world! Do you not know that they are more delicate and sweet to taste than venison or milk or custard? If you will do well by me, and lead me where these mice are, I will love you with all my heart.

If you had slain my father and mother and all my family, I would still love you if you gave me fat mice."

"You are making game of me, I think, Cousin Cat," said Reynard. "Surely no one ever had so great a fancy for mice as you say you have."

"Truly, Reynard," cried the Cat, "I do not make game of you. The subject is far too serious for a jest. Indeed, every word I spoke is true."

"Then, Tybert," said Reynard, "this very night, if I chose, I could fill you with mice, as many as ever you could swallow."

"Fill me, Reynard? It would take many mice to do that, I can tell you."

"Now you joke again, cousin," said the Fox. "How shall I know if you are in earnest or jest?"

"Reynard," cried Tybert, "how often must I tell you that this is no object for jesting? I tell you this: that if I had a fat mouse now, and you offered me its weight in gold, I would not give it up to you."

"I must believe you, Tybert," Reynard said gravely. "I can see that you are really in earnest. Come, let us be off together. I will take you to the barn where these mice are, and then leave you."

"Dear cousin," answered Tybert, "I will go with you wherever you shall take me. This is indeed a solemn quest."

"Very solemn indeed, cousin," said Reynard. "Let us go now, and delay no further: we have talked too long already."

Away they went, Reynard in front, with Tybert close behind, full of merry thoughts about the feast in store for him. The parson's barn was set within a high mud wall, but this was no bar to the Fox. The night before he had

broken in and stolen the parson's best fat hen, and the parson in anger had set a snare in the hole the Fox had made, to catch him if he came again. Master Reynard knew this very well, and as he had served Bruin, so he meant to serve Tybert.

"Come, cousin," said he, "creep in here. The hole leads into the barn. I made it myself, so I should know. It will not be long before you are catching mice as fast as you know how to do it. Hark how they squeak and sing! I will wait here, and you can come out and join me when you have had as many as you want. I will do you a kindness to-night, and to-morrow you shall do me one, and journey with me to the Court. Come, Tybert, make haste, good cousin! Why are you so slow? My wife is waiting for us all this time, and has supper ready. I shall be glad to get home for the night."

"Reynard," said Tybert, "are you quite sure this is safe? Do you promise me I shall come to no harm? I am half afraid to enter this hole."

"Ha-ha, Tybert!" laughed Reynard; "I never thought to see my brave cousin in a fright! Why, what is the matter? I tell you I made the hole myself."

Tybert, ashamed of his fears, waited no longer, but sprang into the hole quickly, where he was at once caught in the snare, as Reynard had planned. He gave a wild jump backward, but too late to escape, for the snare tightened and held him fast. Then began a fine outcry and noise, Tybert screaming and miauling in great terror and anger, and Reynard laughing as gaily as a peal of bells.

"Tybert!" he called, "do you still love mice? Are they fat ones, and good to taste? I wish you were friends with the parson and his wife; they are kind folk, and

would bring you some sauce for your dinner! Ho, Tybert! how you sing! Is it Court manners to sing while you dine? I am glad to know. I wish Isegrim were beside you with all my heart, for he has done me many an ill turn."

Poor Tybert could not so much as turn his head in the snare, but he cried and yelled so loudly that the noise came to the ears of the parson's son Martinet.

"Here is the thief who stole the fat hen!" cried he. "Come, rouse up, everyone. We will give him what he deserves!"

Hearing his son cry out these words, the parson wakened from his sleep, and roused all the household, crying, "The Fox is caught! The Fox is in the trap!"

All the people from the house came running, clad only in their nightshirts. Martinet was first, and belaboured poor Tybert so heavily with his great stick that he blinded one of the Cat's eyes. But in their haste to punish the thief, they came too near to Tybert, who was wild with rage and fear, and sprang upon the parson's bare legs, and drove all his teeth and claws into them. So terribly was the parson hurt that he fell down in a swoon.

"Alas! alas!" cried Dame Jullock, his wife, "my husband is killed!" And she and all the rest turned from Tybert to raise up the parson and carry him to his bed, forgetting the poultry thief.

Reynard, hearing all the outcry, thought Tybert was certainly killed and done for, and, after another hearty laugh, he ran away to his castle of Malepardus. But Tybert, though he was sorely beaten and had lost the sight of one eye, was still alive and strong. So soon as he saw all the people busy around the parson, he began to bite and gnaw the snare asunder, until at last he tore

himself free. Then, with a mighty spring, he was outside the wall, and well on his way to the King's Court, miauling and crying all the way.

It was dark night when he set out, and morning had come before his journey was done. At sunrise he came at last to the Court, and a poor figure he cut before all the assembled Beasts. One eye was blinded, and his neat

"Tybert tore himself free."

fur was torn and rubbed the wrong way. Never was cat in a worse plight than poor Tybert when he came before the King. He could not speak, he was so weary, but lay down and closed his one eye, and all the Beasts came round him and pitied him. "Is this indeed Neighbour Tybert?" they said; and, "Alas! how he is sore wounded!" And they made lamentation over him, and were full of sympathy and anger against Reynard. But

of what use were kind words to poor Tybert? No number of them could bring back his lost eye. He must go half blind all his days.

The King was more angry than all his Court, for now he had sent two messengers, and they had both been deceived and cruelly used. Once again he summoned his council together to inquire as to the best means of bringing Reynard the Fox to justice.

IV

The Badger's Errand

WHEN the council were met together, Grimbart the Badger, who was the Fox's sister's son, stood up and spoke fair words.

"My lords, this is a simple matter enough that we are here to settle. However bad my uncle may be, it cannot be hard to punish him as he deserves. The custom is that a wrongdoer must be three times summoned before the Court. Let us, then, treat Reynard the Fox as we should treat any other Beast, and summon him again by messenger. If he does not choose to answer the summons, it shall be his last chance to defend himself against the charges you bring against him. He must be judged without trial, and found guilty of all. For if he were innocent, he would not refuse to say so, and to come before the King at the third summons."

"Grimbart," said the King, "you know the law and speak it wisely. But methinks it is not a wise Beast we

need now, but the biggest fool on earth. For who but a fool will take the third summons, having seen what has befallen their neighbours on the same quest? I care too well for my subjects to send another on such a bootless journey. I will call no other messenger by name. Let Reynard be judged, and his punishment settled. He deserves no third summons, nor that any of you should suffer for him; but if anyone is fool enough to take the message unbidden, let him go and try if he can bring the Fox back with him."

"My Lord King," solemnly answered Grimbart, "here is a fool who will go. With your Majesty's leave, I myself will take the third summons, and it will go ill with me if I do not bring Reynard to answer it before much time has passed."

"Go, then, Sir Grimbart," said the King, "and look well to yourself that you do not suffer as your neighbours have suffered. Let me tell you, you will need all your wits to keep you unharmed."

So Grimbart the Badger went forth, unbidden, in the cause of justice; and this is how he fared on his quest.

Away went Master Badger by way of the wood-paths on his journey, and so swiftly he went that it was not long before he came to the castle of Malepardus. There he found the gates set open, and Reynard and his wife, Dame Ermeline, playing with their children very pleasantly, and looking as though they had not a care in the world.

"Good-day to you, uncle and aunt," cried their nephew cheerfully. "What a happy family you appear! and how handsome and well grown my young cousins seem to be! It is worth a long journey to come upon so pleasant a sight at the end of it." For Grimbart thought to himself

that nothing would be lost and much might be gained by fair words.

Kindly greetings passed between them, and when the Badger was seated and somewhat rested, he led the talk round to Court doings. "And, good uncle," quoth he, "I hope you may not be doing yourself an injury by staying away in your country place just now. There are many at Court who are your enemies, and if you do not care to defend your character from their attacks upon it, be sure they will gain a hearing in time, for silence is no advocate. Here are your foes accusing you of this and that in full Court, and no one is there to say a word in your favour, for a crowd makes cowards, and we, your friends, dare not speak. Would you not be wiser to come and plead your cause before the King? I come as the third messenger, and I have good reason for believing that I shall be the last sent to you. If you refuse to answer the summons this time, I will not hide from you that the Council have sworn to show you no mercy. In a few days your house will be besieged on all sides, and you will be taken, with your wife and little ones. Then they will set up a gallows before your gate, and hang you upon it, every one. Pray, then, uncle, come with me to Court, and prove your innocence of all these foul charges against your honour. Your wit and wisdom will serve you there better than here. I will stake my life upon it that you will plead so well and wisely that you will be found guilty of none of these things, and all your enemies shall be put to open shame. You have done better things than this often enough. What fear you now?"

This long and sensible speech was not without effect upon Reynard, who was also flattered by the Badger's remarks about his cleverness.

"In truth, Nephew Grimbart," said he, "you put the case very much more sensibly than the others who urged me to come to Court. They were stupid Beasts, but you have some of the family wits about you, I can see. I think, upon the whole, it will be best for me to go with you to Court, as nobody there seems to have enough sense to speak for me. I have little doubt that all will be well when I have said a few words myself to the King. I may have enemies, but everyone knows that the Council could never get on without me. Wherever a great Court is gathered together, with Kings and noble lords, needing sound and good advice, I and my tribe are called upon to give it. All the wisest laws were made by me. I am the King's right hand, and well he knows it. Naturally, I cannot but feel somewhat heavy of heart when I find how many enemies I have. Wise and great though I may be, I cannot deny that one against so many is heavy odds. Well, if I am beaten after all, let it be so. The King is greater than I am, and his will must settle this affair. It is better for me to go and answer for myself than to put my whole family in danger."

Then Reynard turned to his wife, and bade her an affectionate farewell. "If I have good fortune," said he, "I shall soon return to you. Meanwhile, I leave my children in your care. Look well to them, for I love them as well as any father can love his children. My eldest son, Reynardine, grows so like me in subtlety that I hope he may follow in my footsteps and be as famous as his father. Russel, too, is growing a cunning thief, I am proud to see. They are fine boys, and will be brave robbers in time."

Thus, with grave words, the Fox took leave of his family, and departed from them, leaving his poor wife full

of sorrow; for now that Reynard was gone, who should go hunting and robbing to get food for the house? Her family was large and hungry, and Dame Ermeline saw before her a hard task to keep them well supplied with fresh meat.

Reynard and Grimbart set off together in a very friendly manner. They had not gone far when the Fox began to talk of repentance and to mourn over his past misdeeds.

"I would I had nothing upon my mind, good Grimbart," said he. "I should get on better at Court if I had never done many of the things I now remember. I think it would do me good to tell you all the wrong things I may have done: it will be a relief to me, and I shall go upon my way more cheerfully."

"Tell away, uncle," replied Grimbart. "Your stories will while away the time, and if I can ease your mind by listening, I shall be very happy to do so."

Then Reynard began to recount his misdeeds; and so many were they, and so bad, that they lasted a great while in the telling.

"I have behaved badly to all the Beasts that live," sighed the Fox, "especially to Bruin the Bear, who is my uncle. I got him caught in a tree and well beaten not long ago, so that he lost his gloves and hood. Tybert the Cat, too, I deceived with a promise of mice, so that he jumped into a snare and nearly lost his life there. Then, Chanticleer the Cock has suffered very much at my hands, for he had a fine family of children, of whom I have eaten most. I have even spoken against the King and Queen, and some of the things I said of them were so bad that they will not soon be forgotten among their subjects. And the Wolf Isegrim I have ill-treated worse than all the rest, and oftener than I can tell. You

may have heard me call him uncle, but he is no relation of mine. I called him so to flatter and deceive him. Once I told him I would make him a bell-ringer. He loved the sound of bells, and was willing to learn. So I tied his feet to the bell-rope in the church tower, and set him swinging, so that the bell tolled louder than it ever had before, and all the folk came running to see what was happening! Poor Isegrim got a sound beating that time, when they found him there; I thought he would have died of it."

"I wonder that you laugh, uncle," said Grimbart. "These are sad tales you tell. But go on."

"Nephew," cried Reynard, "I was weeping, not laughing. My shoulders shake with grief when I call these things to mind. Listen awhile, and I will tell you some more sad tales, and it will be a strange thing if you do not weep with me when you hear them. I got Isegrim many another beating—once at the fish-ponds, where I set him to catch fish; and once at a rich man's house, where good bacon was to be had. That is a fine story if you like! I often went to this house myself for a meal, and I had a hole in the pantry wall, and made Isegrim creep in. He was pleased enough when he found the tubs of beef and flitches of bacon, but I changed his pleasure to sorrow. I left him feeding, and ran to the rich man's house and into his hall, where he sat at dinner with a great fowl on a dish before him as big as a pig. I snatched the fowl from the dish, and off I sped as fast as my feet would carry me. Then began a fine hue and cry! If I laugh, nephew, it is at the remembrance of that chase, not because I do not repent. The rich man threw his knife after me, but I was too quick for him! Away we went—I first, carrying the fat hen, then the rich

man, and after him all his household, shouting out, 'Kill him! kill him!' But they did not kill me, nor touch me, for I led them to where Isegrim was, and there I threw the fowl down, and slipped aside to a safe place; and when they came up they all set upon the Wolf, thinking him the thief. They set upon him with sticks and staves and heavy stones, and when he lay like one dead they tied a rope to him, and dragged him over the rough roads to a ditch outside the village, and there they threw him in. He lay there all night, and how he ever got out is a mystery to me; but he did get out. Are you weeping, nephew? Not yet? Well, I will tell you some more. Once I told him I would show him where seven fat hens and a cock sat on a perch waiting to be eaten. There was a little trap-door above a ladder in the hen-house wall, and I bade him climb up before me. When we got up I told him to creep in and seize his prey, and he went forward, laughing. But when he had put his fore-paws in and felt about, he called back to me that I was making fun of him, and there was nothing there. 'Uncle,' said I, 'those who used to sit by the door I have swallowed myself; the others are farther away, and if you want them you must go inside and find them.' Isegrim ventured inside upon the narrow perch, and I gave him a little push, so that he fell down to the floor of the hen-house with such noise and clatter that everyone who slept at the farm was awakened by it. They came rushing out, and were not long in finding the Wolf, who was half stunned by the fall. What a beating he had that time! He must be as tough as leather to survive it!"

"Is that all, uncle?" asked Grimbart. "Have you nothing else to confess?"

"Upon my word, nephew," replied the Fox, "I may as

well stop now as at any time. If I begin telling you every one of my ill deeds, we should not finish before we got to Court. Besides, you are my nephew, and it is not fitting that I should put such wickedness into your head. I may have been an ill friend to some, but I hope I am always a good uncle to you."

"Uncle, you puzzle me," said Grimbart; "I do not know whether you are joking or not. These are horrible tales, and while you tell them you roll your eyes so slyly, and make a chuckling noise as though you were laughing all the time."

"Dear nephew," cried Reynard, "you misjudge me. I rolled my eyes to see if you were listening to me, and what you took for chuckling was merely a choking in my throat. I repent very sorely, and to prove it I will give myself any punishment you like to suggest."

Grimbart thought very gravely for some moments, and then broke a branch from a tree near by. "Uncle," said he, "take this rod, and strike yourself with it three times. Then lay it down upon the ground, and jump over it three times, without stumbling or bending your legs. Then pick it up and kiss it, to show that you truly repent and accept punishment with thankfulness."

Reynard had much ado not to smile again at his nephew's gravity, but he managed to look sorrowful as he obeyed Grimbart's directions, taking very good care at the same time to hit the air very hard and his own coat quite softly. When the punishment was over Grimbart spoke solemnly again. "I see you are really repentant, uncle," said he. "Now you must resolve only to do good in future. Leave off all your wicked ways, and spend your life in charity, kindliness, and peace. This is your only means of atoning for all your wrongdoings."

"You speak truly, Grimbart," said Reynard, rolling his eyes piously. "Such is my intention and wish." So they journeyed onward, with serious conversation, until they came to a meadow where a great number of geese, hens, and ducks were walking and feeding. The sight was too much for Reynard. He made a great spring, and seized a fat duck by the neck; but the feathers came off in his mouth, and the bird escaped.

"Uncle, uncle!" shrieked Grimbart, "what are you thinking of? Surely you have taken leave of your senses! Where are your good resolutions that you made such a short time ago?"

"Truly, dear nephew," said Reynard sadly, "I had forgotten them. I repent, and will never behave so any more."

But as they went on their way he cast many longing glances over his shoulder at the poultry, and wished his nephew were out of the way. It is no easy thing to shake off the customs of a lifetime, and Reynard began to feel very uneasy in his new character, and to lick his lips and sigh as he went farther and farther from the fat birds.

Grimbart, noticing these backward glances, spoke more severely than before.

"Fie upon you, false Reynard! I see where your eyes wander, in spite of all your talk of repentance."

"Nephew Badger," said the Fox crossly, "you deceive yourself, and are unjustly suspicious. I was deep in good thoughts, and your chatter disturbs me. Pray keep silence while I say a hymn to myself, and repent in my heart of all the mischief I have done. Remember, you are only a youth, and should keep silence unless you are spoken to."

"Well. uncle," replied Grimbart, "it may be so, but

your glances and sighs made me think otherwise. No doubt I was wrong."

Thus they continued on their way in silence, and by-and-by they came in sight of the Court. Then, indeed, did Reynard begin to repent in good earnest, and to wish that his past life had not been so full of misdeeds.

"Alas!" he thought, "I have had plenty of enjoyment, but I fear I must pay a heavy price for it."

And as every step brought him nearer to his trial, he hung his head and felt sick at heart.

V

The Fox at Court

WHEN the news got about among the Beasts that Reynard and Grimbart had arrived at Court, every one of them prepared some complaint against the Fox, and many were the angry looks and muttered words that met the traveller's ears. But Reynard was wise enough to hold his head high and wear an innocent look before the world. His heart quaked within him, but to see him come to Court you would have thought he was the King's own son, who feared nothing, and had nothing to fear. His bearing was gallant, and he walked up the highway to where the King sat upon his throne as though his mind was as clear of evil as any in the world. Before the throne he stopped, and made a low bow. Then, standing fearlessly in the open space, he greeted his Sovereign with fair and subtle words.

"Greeting, most gracious King!" said he. "May all your undertakings prosper, and good fortune and blessing sit with you upon the throne! Your Majesty has no more faithful and loving subject than myself, though I know well that my enemies at Court have tried to prove otherwise. I have been your servant all my life, and so I shall die. There are many here who seek to do me harm, but I know your Majesty's wisdom too well to think that their false tales have any weight with you. You have ever scorned liars and flatterers, and it is not to be supposed that you will now begin to listen to their evil counsels. Such wicked ones as they are will reap their reward in due time, and we honest and true men need not fear their ill will."

"Peace, Reynard!" said the King gravely; "I know only too well where to find lies and flattery. Your fair words will do you no good. As you say, I have ever scorned flatterers, and it is not likely that my mind will now change towards them. Answer me this: Have you lived in peace with your fellows since I commanded that peace should be kept through all my realm?"

At these words Chanticleer could no longer keep silence, but raised his voice shrilly, crying: "Peace, my Lord King? What have I lost by this peace?" and then fell to weeping again.

"Silence, Chanticleer," commanded the King. "I will deal with this traitor myself. Hearken, Reynard, to my words," he went on. "You say you have ever been my most faithful subject. How have you treated my messengers that I have sent to you? Here are Tybert the Cat and Bruin the Bear, both covered with sore wounds, to prove your wicked ways. They make no complaint,

but they suffer silently. To-day you shall answer with your life for these sins you have committed."

"My Lord King," cried the Fox, "how shall I answer for all the wounds your subjects show? If your Majesty employed Bruin upon a message, and he chose to neglect it to go stealing honey at the carpenter's yard, and there suffered punishment, what is that to do with me? If he wanted revenge, why did he not take it himself? He is strong and big enough to defend himself. As for Tybert, I received him with friendship, and made him welcome; yet, against my advice and wishes, he stole into the parson's barn to catch mice. If he lost his eyes or even his life there, why am I to blame? I am not his guardian; I could only advise, not order, him to keep out of harm's way. Nay, my lord, I am innocent of all these things. Your Majesty is great and mighty; I am poor and weak. If it is the King's pleasure to kill me, I must die, whether justly or unjustly. I am your servant; my only strength is in your justice and mercy. To these I appeal, as none have yet appealed in vain. Yet if it be your Majesty's will that I shall die, then do I accept it humbly. I can say no more. But yet I cannot think it a worthy thing for so great a King to wreak his vengeance upon a subject so small."

As the Fox finished his speech, a great crowd of Beasts came pushing forward in their eagerness to be heard, all calling upon the King and beseeching him to listen to their complaints. Bellin the Ram and Dame Olway, his wife, cried, "Hear us, O King," and Tybert the Cat and Chanticleer repeated their cry. And Isegrim the Wolf, Kyward the Hare, Brunel the Goose, the Boar, the Camel and the Panther, the Weasel, the Kid and the Goat, Baldwin the Ass, Bortle the Bull, Hamel the Ox, and all

the rest, brought so many and such bitter complaints against him that Reynard was made prisoner, and summoned to his trial then and there.

The King's Council being assembled and waiting, Reynard was led before them, and the trial began. It was a long business, for nearly every Beast had some accusation to bring against the prisoner. Most of these charges were very terrible, but Reynard had an answer for every one, so that it appeared as though the talking would never be finished. Indeed, it seemed at times as if the craft and wisdom of the Fox must triumph, so subtly did he twist the questions and answers to his own advantage. But the complaints were too many and too plainly true for this to happen. When every witness had been heard, and all the evidence examined, it was time to pronounce judgment ; and Reynard, in spite of all he could say, was condemned to death. The sentence was that he should be hanged by his neck, and when Reynard heard it, he lost heart at last, and hung his head in anger and sorrow. None of his lies had served to save him, though he had argued better than all his accusers.

Grimbart, his nephew, and a few of his other relations took leave of him sadly, and left the Court, that they might not be there to see him die. The King saw them go, and thought to himself that here was something in favour of Reynard.

"Though the Fox is bad enough in many ways," thought he, "yet there must be some good in him if these good Beasts mourn his fate so deeply. It behoves us to think well over this matter before we send him to his death."

While the noble Lion was turning over these things in his mind, Tybert the Cat cried out upon the Bear and the

Wolf for delaying so long about the business of hanging Reynard.

"Sir Bruin and Sir Isegrim," said he, "why are you so slow? It is nearly night already, and if the darkness comes before we hang him, it is certain we shall not find him waiting for us when it is gone! There are many ways of escape all round us in the bushes and hedges, and if Reynard once gets away, he is a great deal too clever to let us catch him again. If he is to be hanged, do it now, and get it over quickly."

"There is a gallows near at hand," answered Isegrim; and as he spoke he gave a sigh, for he had a soft heart in spite of all his sufferings.

"Isegrim, you are afraid," taunted Tybert. "Do you not want him hanged? Did he not have both your brothers hanged? Justice should make you wish to punish him quickly instead of making delays."

"Your anger blinds your reason, Sir Cat," growled Isegrim. "We would hang him fast enough if we had a rope, but where is one to be found that is both long and strong enough for the business?"

"Come, neighbours!" said Reynard, who had long kept silence. "Has not Tybert got the very rope that nearly hanged him at the parson's house? He climbs well and swiftly; let him run with it up the tree and put an end to my pain quickly. Isegrim and Bruin, this is pleasant work indeed, that two uncles should hang their nephew! I wish I had not lived to see it, and I shall be glad when I can look no more on such cowardly deeds. Make haste and do your work, since you are determined upon it. Had you not better go in front to lead me, Bruin? And Isegrim can follow close behind, so that I cannot escape!"

"I am glad to hear you speak sense for once," replied Bruin shortly; and Isegrim commanded his party to lead Reynard to the hanging-place. They took the Fox by his feet and his beard, and set forth; and as they went Reynard spoke sadly and solemnly, while he rolled his eyes from side to side to see who listened, and what heed they gave to his words.

"Oh, dear uncle," sighed he, "what sorrow you bring upon yourself by serving me thus! Do you love to see me suffer? I would pay you with mercy were I free, but I am fast prisoner, and you may do with me what you will. I cannot escape. If my dear aunt, the Wolf's wife, could but see me now, she would beg my freedom for old affection's sake. Bruin and Tybert, I leave my revenge to justice. Do your worst, and do it quickly. I can but die once, and my greatest sorrow now is that I have lived so long as to see this shameful day, and the cruelty of my own kin. I fear not death. I saw my father die, and I would I were dead too."

"Come, neighbours," was all the Bear's answer, "we do no good by delaying." And they hastened to the place where evil-doers were put to death. Tybert, Isegrim, and Bruin led Reynard; and the rest, with the King and Queen and all the Court, followed after to see justice done upon so evil a Beast.

But Reynard's subtle wits were again at work planning how he might escape from death, revenge himself upon his enemies, and bring the King to take his part against them.

"The King may be angered against me, and many others too, and with good enough reason," he thought, "but they shall find me a good friend if I escape, and be glad enough to ask my counsel. However wise they are,

I am wiser, and I am born to rise higher in the world than a gallows can raise me."

"Sir Bruin," said the Wolf, "remember your hood and gloves: here is your chance for revenge. Now, Tybert, you are the lightest and quickest: climb up the tree, and bind the cord fast to that high bough with strong knots: it is your turn to pay back some of all the pain Reynard has caused you. Bruin, see that he does not escape; hold him fast. I will help to set the ladder up."

"Do so, Neighbour Wolf," replied Bruin; "I have him fast."

Then spoke Reynard again in melancholy tones.

"Now is my heart heavy, and the fear of death is upon me. In a little while I shall be gone. My lord the King and dear Queen, grant me this one boon before you send me from the world. Let me now make open confession of all my past sins, that all may hear me and know how truly I repent. I shall die easier when I have rid my conscience of this burden."

All who stood by and heard these sad words were filled with pity for the prisoner, lately so free and strong, now bound and helpless.

"Hear him, O King," they entreated; and the King said: "Your request is granted. Speak on."

Then Reynard's heart leaped for joy, for he thought: "If a few words can so move them, what shall many do?" And he sighed, and put on his most grievous and solemn air, and showed the whites of his eyes, so that all wept to see him.

"You who are mine enemies, and whom, alas! I have often wronged," he began, "listen to the story of my youth, and how I was first tempted to sin. When I was young I was one of the best children (though I scorn to

boast of this) that could be found in the kingdom. My playfellows were the innocent lambs, and many were the happy games and gambols we had together. I was so long with them that at last I bit one, and tasted his blood. After that I thirsted for another taste, until I could bear it no longer. So it came about that I heard some kids bleating in a field, and I ran to them and slew two in my haste, and ate them. Was it not my nature, and the nature of all who hear me, to slay fresh meat and eat it? I grew big and strong, and fed upon fowls and geese. Wherever I came upon poultry I slew them and feasted, until I grew so fierce that I was ready to kill and eat whatever Beast I met. It was then that I first met Isegrim, and became his comrade, which to-day I grievously repent, for from him I learned all evil ways. It was winter when I met him, when he was hiding under a tree for warmth, and he greeted me friendly, and told me he was my uncle. We swore good fellowship together, and set out in company upon our wanderings. He stole the great things, and I the small, and we shared and shared alike. But Isegrim was ever selfish, and managed that the small share was mine: I never got half my fair due. So I learned to distrust all Beasts, for he was my comrade, and yet he deceived me. When he got a calf or a ram, he would make opportunity to quarrel with me and drive me away, so that he might eat it all. And if his prey was an ox or a cow, then he called his wife and seven children to the feast, and so merrily did they feed that it was not often I got more than a bone for my share. And all this time he bade me be contented and thankful: he was ever ready with good advice, as he is to-day! Nevertheless, I bear him no ill-will, for my need was not so great. I had so much gold and silver that seven waggons would not carry it."

Now, when the King heard Reynard speak of so much treasure, he began to feel a desire for it, and asked the Fox where he had disposed of such great riches.

"My Lord King," said Reynard, "it was stolen from me. Yet I do not mourn, for if it had not been so it would have cost your Majesty your life. You would have been murdered. I am thankful that things have turned out as they have, for what comfort would my riches be to me if my King were dead?"

The Queen was greatly moved by these words, for she loved her husband truly, and trembled to hear that his life had been in so great danger.

"What is this, Reynard?" she cried. "What terrible tale have you to unfold? Let us hear it, and see that you speak the whole truth, as you wish to be forgiven."

VI

The Fox is Pardoned

WITH a sorrowful countenance, Reynard answered the Queen's words. "Your Majesty, I am very near to death, and it is not right that my last words on earth should be such as will betray other sinners. Rather should I have mercy, and say nothing. But if the King wills it, I must speak on, though it is to my great grief; for these evil Beasts are among my own kinsmen, and I shrink from betraying them, however they deserve punishment."

"Reynard," said the King sadly, "is this true indeed?"

"It is true, my lord," answered the Fox. "Would

that it were not so. Think you that I would wish to die with falsehood upon my lips?" And as he spoke he trembled and shook, as though his grief and shame were too heavy for him.

"Husband," said the Queen, "we must hear him. Bid him speak on and fear nothing. He shall have no blame, whatever he tells us. Is it not so? See how he trembles, and have pity on him."

"Wife," answered the King, "it shall be so. Let there be silence among all present, while Reynard tells his tale."

"What the King wills is my will," replied Reynard. "Let there be silence. I have no choice but to tell openly of this treason against our lord's life. I will tell all and keep nothing back, nor spare any guilty Beasts whose names are known to me. It is the King's will. First I appeal to my dear nephew and trusty friend Grimbart, who has ever helped me in my need, to bear me out in all I say, that it is the truth, and nothing but the truth."

This Reynard said that the listeners might give more heed to his tale to believe it, for Grimbart was known to be honest among them all. Then he went on with his story in these words:

"My father had found our late King's treasures hidden in a pit, and he took them for himself, and was rich and powerful. And as time went on he became more and more proud, and despised those Beasts who before had been his companions. He began to be envious of those in high place, and to covet great position in the land for himself. So he made a plot against the King's life, as you shall hear. He sent for Tybert the Cat, and bade him go into the forest of Arden and find Bruin, and tell him that if he would take his part he should be King in

the Lion's place. Now, Bruin had long wished for this very thing, and he came gladly enough to take sides with my father. Then they sent for other wise Beasts—Isegrim the Wolf, and my nephew Grimbart (alas! that I should have to say this!), and these, with Tybert, held council all the long night in a place lying between the villages of Gaunt and Elfe. Between them they swore there to put the King to death for the sake of my father's riches. Hearken now, and hear what befell. The four together swore upon Isegrim's crown to make Bruin a lord, and then to bring him to Aachen and set the King's crown upon his head, and put him upon the Lion's throne, to be King over all the country. And if any should disagree with their plans, my father was to drive him out of the land, and take all his riches from him, and turn him forth a poor beggar.

"But these evil plans were not to meet with success. Grimbart, my nephew, being drunken and foolish with wine, told the secret to his wife, Dame Slopecade, who was always a great gossip. The next time the Dame took a walk with my wife upon the heath, out it all came, though she made my wife promise and swear that nothing should ever make her repeat it to any living soul. But my wife was not much less of a gossip and a chatterbox than Dame Slopecade herself, and very soon I had the whole story repeated to me upon promise of secrecy. When I heard the horrible tale, and knew it to be true by reason of all the proof she was able to give me, my heart became heavy as lead and cold as ice, and every hair on all my body stood straight up on end. I thought of the old tale of the Frogs and their King: how they complained that they had no King, but were a free people, with no one to guide them. Then a King came to them.

But he was a Stork, who ate up a great many of them, so that they cried out more than ever, and begged for freedom again ; but it was too late. Once bound, always bound, as the saying is. And I thought how the like might happen to us, and was full of sorrow and fear. My Lord King, your Majesty cannot guess nor imagine all I suffered for your sake. I knew Bruin the Bear to be a thief and murderer, and dreaded lest we should all be at his mercy. It seemed to me a terrible thing that one so cruel and wicked should take the place of our noble, just, and righteous King. In all the world there never was, nor is, so great and wise and highly-born a Sovereign as the Lion, and the Bear has more evil deeds of his own and his ancestors' to remember than any other Beast of us all. So I thought and considered and pondered long and anxiously how I might avert this dreadful thing, and put a stop to my father's evil schemes to make a King of a traitor and a thief. I prayed earnestly that the King might be strong and prosperous and live long, and always I went in sore fear and dread of what might befall him. Then I thought that if my father lost his treasure, and had nothing to bribe his friends with, they would give up their plans. So I set to work to discover where his treasure lay hidden. I spent all my time hiding, and watching my father as he went about in the woods and the bushes, and in the fields. Wherever he cast his eye I cast mine, and kept the closest watch upon him by night and by day. Well, one day, when I was lying flat on the ground and well hidden, I saw my father come running out of a hole. He stopped and looked all round him to find if anyone saw him, but he did not see me close by. Then he began to cover over the hole with sand, and smooth it down to look like all the ground around it, and wherever his

footsteps left marks in the sand he brushed them away with his tail, so that no one should see where he had been. He even licked some places to make them lie smooth. I wept as I watched him, for it was sad to me to find how sly and false my father had become. When he had made all tidy, he ran off to the village upon some business or other, and I leaped out from my hiding-place, and ran to the hole, and scratched and scraped my way in. There I found such plenty of silver and gold as I had never dreamed of in all my life. There is no one here, though he is the oldest among you, who has ever seen the like. I ran for my wife Ermeline, and together we worked and toiled at moving the treasure to another place. We rested not by night nor by day until we had moved it all away to a hole under a deep hawthorn hedge near by our home. All this time my father was with his friends, and little thought that his treasure was gone. They wrote letters to all the tribes, telling them that whoever would join their forces should be well paid by Bruin the Bear. And my father ran about with the letters, and went on many a long and weary journey to deliver them safely. At last he had been to all parts of the country, and returned to the Bear and his fellows, and told them of the perils he had been through by reason of the hunters, who with their great hounds had chased him wellnigh to death. Then he showed them the answers to the letters he had taken, and they were much pleased. For not counting the Bears, the Foxes, the Cats, and the Badgers, there were twelve hundred of Isegrim's tribe who swore that they would come to help the Bear directly he sent a messenger to fetch them. All they asked in return was that they might have a month's wages before they set off on the adventure. I was glad to hear that,

for I knew how it would be when the time came for paying wages. My father went off then to his treasure-place, and when he came there, he found it broken open and all his store of gold and silver gone. His anger and disappointment were so great that he died of vexation upon the spot. Thus the plot came to an end, and all through my doing. Yet what good fortune have my deeds brought to me? There are the traitors Isegrim and Bruin in high office at Court and in the King's confidence, while I am treated as a prisoner and a traitor, and have neither thanks nor reward. I gave my own father in the King's service. Your Majesty, I ask you, have you many subjects that would so serve you?"

"Reynard," said the King, "tell me where this treasure is now."

The King and Queen leaned forward eagerly to hear the Fox's answer. But Reynard shook his head sadly. "Shall I give my treasure as well as my life to my enemies?" he asked. "Shall I leave nothing for my wife and children when I am gone from them? Surely it would be no good deed on my part to rob my own kin of what is theirs when I am leaving them with no protector and breadwinner."

"Nay, Reynard," cried the Queen. "If you will tell us where the treasure is, the King will forgive you freely. You shall have your life if you will live it as a good subject and give up all evil ways."

"Dear Lady Queen," replied Reynard, "if the King will believe me, and will do as you say, and forgive and forget all he has against me, I can make him richer than all the Princes of the world. My treasure is beyond the wealth of any kingdom, and so great that none can count it."

"Wife," said the King, "you are too easily beguiled by an idle tale. Though I grieve to say it, the Fox was born to lie and steal, and has done so all his life. There is no truth in him; he is a liar at heart."

"Nay, my Lord King," said the Queen. "I believe him now, and you may well do so. Does not his story bear proofs of truth? Is it likely that he would accuse his own father, and his nephew the Badger, when, if he were inventing the tale, he might have laid the blame upon any of his enemies?"

"Well, Dame," answered the King, "if you will have it so, it shall be so. I cannot feel so certain as you do, but nevertheless, I will run the risk you ask of me. But if ever he does wrong again and is untrue to me, then I swear that he shall have no mercy, neither he nor any of his tribe to the ninth degree."

For a few moments Reynard looked upon the King in silence, too astonished at heart and relieved for any words. Then he made answer: "My lord, I have been called wise by many in my time: it were less than true if I were to make up so foolish a tale when I thought myself near to death."

Then the King rose in his place, and lifting a straw from the ground, smote Reynard lightly with it upon the shoulder, saying: "Rise up now, Reynard the Fox. You are pardoned for your trespasses, and for those of your father. Live for the future in peace and well-doing."

It was no wonder then that Reynard rejoiced, and could have laughed aloud for joy in his freedom, for he had been very near his last moments, and only his own wits had saved him from death.

"My Lord the King, and my Lady the Queen," said he, "I cannot thank you enough for your justice and mercy

towards me. Heaven bless you! You shall never regret your mercy, for I will make you the richest King and Queen in all the world. There is no one living on whom I had rather bestow my treasure. Take this straw, my lord, in pledge of the treasure of King Ermeryk. I give it freely to your Majesty, and call this Court witness of my gift."

The King laughed, well pleased, and flung the straw away as he thanked the Fox in courteous words. Reynard laughed too, but inwardly. His face was grave enough for all to see, as he bowed before the throne and began to give his counsel as to how the treasure should be found, while the King listened eagerly.

"My lords," said he, "mark my words well, and you shall hear all. On the west side of Flanders lies a great forest called Husterloo, and by it a wide lake that is known as Crackenpit. Hardly anyone ever visits this place from one year's end to another, for it is too vast a wilderness for Beasts to travel. Here the treasure is hidden. Your Majesty, listen carefully to all I say, for you and our gracious Queen must go yourselves upon this journey: there is no one whom I would trust to go for you. I have told you the name of the place, and now I will tell you where the treasure lies. When you come to Crackenpit, you will find close to the pit or lake two birch-trees standing together. Go to these trees, for they are the guardians of the treasure. Scratch and dig away a little moss beside them, and you shall find it all lying there awaiting you. Gold and silver and jewels you shall find, beyond price. And the crown that King Ermeryk wore is there also, the very crown that Bruin the Bear would be wearing now if his evil will had had its way. Ah, your Majesty, when all these riches are yours, how

often will you think of your faithful Reynard, and say in your heart, 'Reynard the Fox, wise Beast and true subject, how can I thank you or praise enough the wit and subtlety that have made you serve me so well?' And you will bless me for your good-fortune. O King, is it not so?"

"Indeed it is so, Reynard," replied the King. "But there is another service you must do me: you must come with us, and show us yourself where this treasure lies, for I know not the way, and should never find it. I have heard it said that King Ermeryk's treasure lies at London, or Paris, or Aachen, or Cologne, but never at Crackenpit. Methinks that is a feigned name, and it would be long before we found such a place."

This was not at all pleasant hearing to Reynard, and he blushed red at the King's wisdom; but he put a bold face on the matter, and answered loudly, as one grieved at such suspicion:

"Does your Majesty still believe me false after all that has passed? Alas! such is my ill-fortune, to be sneered at and disbelieved on all sides, when I seek only to help and do service to your Majesty. But I can prove my words here and now. Kyward the Hare, come hither and bear witness before the King."

All the Beasts turned round at these words, wondering what fresh story they should hear, and watched little Kyward come timidly forward and stand before the King.

"Come, Kyward," said Reynard, "why are you shaking and quaking? Are you cold? Stand up, man, and answer what I tell you. Have I not spoken truly as to Crackenpit? Tell the King what you know, and I charge you to speak faithfully if you are a loyal

servant of His Majesty, and our lady the Queen. Come, answer !"

"Sir Reynard," answered Kyward, in a trembling voice, 'I will speak the truth, and the truth only, though I lose my life by it."

"Speak up, then, and fear nothing," said Reynard; and Kyward went on:

"I know Crackenpit well. I was there twelve years ago. It was in a wood called Husterloo upon a warren in the wilderness where there were hunting grounds. I suffered a great deal there, and met with ill people. There was one there who made false money, and he had many bad friends with him. But I made a fellowship with Ring the Hound, and I escaped many a danger with his help. If he were here he would bear me out in what I say, and he would tell you that I never trespassed against the King's laws or did wrong in any way, but have always been humble and loyal."

"Well spoken, Kyward," said Reynard kindly. "That is enough; go back to your place among your friends. The King desires to hear no more from you."

Kyward ran back thankfully to his place, and the King looked with more favour upon Reynard.

"Is it true, your Majesty?" asked the Fox. "Did I deceive you about Crackenpit?"

"Nay, Reynard," answered the King. "I ask your pardon that I doubted your word. It was not kind of me to do so. Now, my friend, let us decide upon our journey to this place. You shall go with us, as I said before, to show us where it lies, so that we may waste no time."

"Your Majesty," replied the Fox, "is it possible that you think me unwilling to go with you? I desire nothing

more keenly than to be your guide on this adventure, but, alas! I am in no condition to go with you. I am newly forgiven of my past sins, by your Majesty's grace, but I am not yet fit to be your companion on any quest. Those who are truly penitent go on pilgrimages or undertake some hard task which will take long to do, before they think themselves fit to join in great and noble company. Permit me first to do something of the kind to prove my penitence and sorrow. By your Majesty's leave I will to-morrow rise early and go forth upon a lonely pilgrimage, without companions or any comfort and mirth. When I have been on a journey to Rome and back, thinking only of repentance all the way, then I shall feel that I am really fit to join your Majesty, and to go honourably in your company and the Queen's to any place you shall desire. If I were to go with you now the people would scorn your Majesty and say, 'Look, our King walks with sinful beasts,' so that you would have blame through me, and that would break my heart indeed."

"You speak with wisdom, Fox," replied the King. "It is as you say. I have no wish to appear as the friend of evil Beasts. It is better that you should go forth alone and prove by your meek behaviour how deep is your repentance. Meanwhile, I will take Kyward the Hare, or some other, for my guide to this place Crackenpit. My counsel to you, Reynard, is that you start at once, and show your sorrow for your past sins by a blameless life."

"My lord," answered the Fox, "your will is mine. I will go forth at once to earn forgiveness from all the world."

"You are making a brave start, Reynard," said the

King kindly. "Come back to us when you have made friends of all your enemies."

Then the King rose up and stood upon a high stone above all the Beasts, and commanded them all to keep silence, and to sit down in a ring upon the grass, every one in his proper place. Reynard the Fox stood near by the Queen, to whom he might well feel grateful.

Then the King raised his voice and spoke. "Hear now, my people," said he, "young and old, rich and poor, all who are here to-day. This Reynard, who was one of my chief counsellors, has lately done many evil things, and this very day was decreed to die for his sins. But he has told us, and proved it to us, that he did a great service to me and to my Queen in saving our lives at the cost of his own father's honour and life. Therefore we have to-day pardoned him of all his offences. The Queen has entreated me for his life, and I have granted her request. Freely I give him his life and his old place at Court, and for the service that he has done my house I command that you all do honour to him, and also to his wife and children. I will hear no more complaints against him. He has given me his pledge of loyalty, and I will trust him in all ways. To-morrow he will go forth upon a long pilgrimage, alone and unattended, and when he returns again among us, all his past ill-doing will be forgotten and forgiven."

VII

Reynard's Letter to the King

REYNARD chuckled to himself, but the other Beasts were less well pleased, and much muttered grumbling went round among them.

"Look," said Tisellin the Raven to Isegrim and Bruin, who stood with Tybert a little way off. "See how things have turned out. What will you silly folk do now, I wonder? Are you not all betrayed, and turned into traitors at the Fox's words? But the wily Reynard is made a squire and a courtier, and given honour and high office at Court. All his sins the King has forgiven, but what about yours?"

"This is idle talk, Tisellin," answered Isegrim. "What do you mean by it?"

"What I say, Neighbour Wolf," said the Raven crossly. "Did he not accuse you?"

Then Isegrim and Bruin began to feel very uneasy. And the Cat, Tybert, also bemoaned himself heartily that he had ever met Reynard. "I would gladly give my eye over again to be in his good books," said the Cat. "He is a dangerous Beast, and no one who is his enemy can hope for good-fortune."

"Come, Bruin," said Isegrim. "We will speak with the King, and insist on justice."

He went proudly across the grass to where the King stood, and began to speak fiercely and angrily about Reynard, and to defend himself against the Fox's charges. So loudly and angrily did he speak that the King's

patience gave way, and he ordered the Wolf and Bear to be arrested for insolence. They were seized and bound, and Reynard rejoiced at their downfall. He did them more harm, too, for he begged of the Queen a piece of Bruin's fur to make himself a wallet for his pilgrimage. "And, your Majesty," said he, when he had got this, "I am your pilgrim, and should be well provided for my journey. My aunt Ursula, the Wolf's wife, has more shoes than she wants, and I have none. She seldom goes out, and can well spare me a pair."

"Certainly, Reynard," said the Queen. "You ought to have good shoes, and there are none better than those worn by the Wolf and his wife. They shall each give you a pair, for you will need more than one pair to go safely upon so long and rough a road."

So Isegrim was made to lie down, and his shoes were hauled off and given to Reynard. They fitted him so tightly that his feet were left torn and wounded, and no one ever saw a more doleful sight than the Wolf made, lying like a roast fowl with his legs trussed up. Then Dame Ursula must needs lie down too, and part with her hind-shoes. They made a pretty pair, and Reynard laughed in his sleeve as he looked on them, but he spoke gravely and tenderly.

"Dear aunt," said he, "you are the dearest to me of all my kin. I am glad I have a remembrance of you to take on my journey, and I hope it may bring you a blessing!"

Poor Dame Ursula was almost too angry and miserable to speak, but she managed to sob out a hope that Reynard would be punished for his wicked conduct. Isegrim and Bruin could not get out a word for anger, but lay swelling with fury at the turn things had taken.

The next morning, very early, Reynard arose with the sun. First he greased his new shoes and tied them firmly on his feet, and then he brushed and cleaned his fine red coat, and went to say farewell to the King and Queen.

"Noble Sovereigns," said he, "I greet you and wish you good-day. May I ask for my staff and wallet, that I may start off upon my way? The sooner I go the sooner I shall return to Court."

"That is so," said the King, and he called Bellin the Ram, and bade him wait upon Reynard, and fetch his wallet and staff, and attend him to the road.

So Bellin, much against his will—for none of the beasts loved Reynard—did as the King bade him, and fetched the wallet of bear-fur, and the stout staff which Reynard would carry, and gave them to the Fox. Then Reynard was ready to start. He looked as mournfully as he could at the King, as though he could not bear to leave him, and he even pretended to weep, though he could not screw out any tears, however hard he tried. For, indeed, his only sorrow was that all the other beasts were not in the same case as the Bear and the Wolf, and he was so pleased at getting his own freedom that he could not think much of anything else.

"Think of me, dear friends," he said, "and remember me when I am absent."

"Reynard," said the King, "since you are determined to be gone, you may go, but I wish you were not in such haste."

"Nay, your Majesty," returned the Fox, "it is time I left you: I do not deserve to be here longer. Give me leave that I may start upon my journey."

So the King blessed Reynard and bade him farewell,

and he ordered all the Court to attend him out to the roadway, except Bruin and Isegrim, who still lay fast bound. There was no one there who was sorry to see the Fox's back, though many would have rather seen him hanged than free. Reynard moved off with a great air. You would have laughed if you had seen the sly Fox start out, attended by all the unwilling Beasts, and with the King himself beside him.

Inwardly he laughed a good deal and rejoiced in his own cunning, but he kept a grave face, and trod softly, with his head up, but his eyes cast down.

"My Lord the King," said he presently, "I pray you to return to the palace. You must not endanger your noble self upon this perilous road. You have two murderers bound near by, and if they should escape they might do you a mischief."

Then he stood up upon his hind-legs, and bade them all farewell. And so mournfully did he gaze upon them, that some of them were really touched by his pitiful looks, and were ready to forgive him then and there.

But to Bellin and Kyward Reynard did not say farewell, for he had a mind to see more of them.

"Dear friends," said he, "come a little way with me. I never had any quarrel with you nor you with me. You are good to walk with, kind and courteous Beasts, of whom no one has any complaint. You are quiet and wise, and your manner of living reminds me of the time when I was a hermit and ate no meat. You take no delight in flesh, but are quite happy with a meal of grass and leaves. It is a pleasure to be in such good company."

With such flattery Reynard kept Bellin and Kyward beside him until they came all together to his castle of Malepardus. When they stood before the gateway he

spoke to Bellin in these words : "Cousin, I have a grievous work before me—to say farewell to my dear wife and children. Wait here for me. Kyward shall come in, if he will, for he is a good comforter, and will help me to soothe their distress."

"Even so, cousin," replied Bellin ; "I hope he may be of help to you. It is a sad business."

So Reynard led Kyward in by the gates and through the underground ways to his den. There lay Dame Ermeline, his wife, with her children, all sorrowing together over the supposed death of the Fox. When his wife saw him she could scarcely believe her eyes. Great was her rejoicing and wonder over his wallet and staff and fine new shoes.

"What means all this, dear Reynard ?" cried she, when she could speak for joy.

"Dear wife," answered Reynard, "I was arrested at Court, but am forgiven. The King has set me free, but I must go and do penance on a pilgrimage before settling down at home again. Bruin the Bear and Isegrim the Wolf are hostages for me. And Kyward here has been given to us to do what we will with him. The King said himself that Kyward was the first to complain against me, and I am very much angered with him."

When poor little Kyward heard these words he was terribly afraid, and would have fled from the castle if he could. But as he turned, trembling, to escape, Reynard, who stood between him and the door, caught him by the neck. In vain he cried, "Help ! help ! Bellin, come, rescue me ! The pilgrim will slay me !" With two sharp nips the Fox laid him dead upon the ground.

"Let us eat this good fat hare," said Reynard then, and Ermeline and her children came running to the feast.

When they had feasted, Ermeline begged of Reynard to tell her the whole tale of his escape, for she had learned

"Reynard caught him by the neck."

not to believe in half the Fox said, and could not fancy that there was nothing more to discover.

"Dame," said Reynard, "this is the truth of the matter. I flattered the King and Queen, so that I got them to let me go. But when they hear of this work they will be very wroth with me, and will perhaps seek to hang me, as they did before. Let us be up and away to a safe place where they cannot find us. I know of a forest where we can live without fear of being caught for years and years. There are plenty of fat fowls there—partridges and woodcocks and other wild game, dear dame—and if you will come with me you will lead a merry life. The air is sweet there, and there are sweet wells and fresh sparkling brooks for drink. We shall be rich as well as peaceful, for the King let me go free because I told him that King Ermeryk's treasure lay at a place called Crackenpit; but it is not there. He may hunt Crackenpit all through, but he will find nothing for his pains. Well, I have done with him. I have got away from him at last, after being in as great danger of death as anyone has ever been in. I shall give him no second chance to catch me, that I vow. My wits got me away, and they shall keep me away."

"Reynard," said his wife, "I do not think your plan is a wise one. How can we take the children to a strange place where we do not even know our way about? Here we are safe enough, and have all we want to eat and drink. Even if the King seeks us here, there are so many secret ways of escape that he would never catch us. You are the lord of this place, and if we leave it you will only be a traveller and adventurer. What troubles me is that you have vowed to go on a long journey and must keep your vow."

"Nay, wife," answered the Fox, "that need not trouble you. I have often heard it said that a vow forced

from one is no vow. I was obliged to make such a promise so as to get away safely, but to perform it would not be worth as much as a cat's tail to me. I will do as you advise, and stay at home here. Let the King do his worst ; my subtlety should be a match for his, any day. If he seeks harm, he shall find it, I promise him. Let him run his head into my sack if he likes !"

All this while Bellin was waiting outside the castle for Kyward, and getting very impatient of his long delay. He began now to call out angrily to the Hare to make haste and come out. "Am I to wait here for ever ?" cried he. "What are you about, Kyward ? Hasten, and come out. I am going home."

When Reynard heard these words, he ran out and spoke softly to the Ram.

"Do not be angry, dear Bellin," he said. "Kyward is with his dear aunt. I think it is not very gracious of you to be vexed for such a cause. Go on, if you wish. Kyward bade me say he is lighter of foot than you are, and will soon catch you up. His aunt and cousins are in sore distress that I am leaving them, and he stays to comfort them awhile."

"I thought he cried out for help once," said Bellin. "Did anything happen ?"

The Fox frowned upon the Ram, and answered him very gravely.

"Take care what you say, Cousin Bellin. What harm should come to Kyward in my house ? What you heard was my wife falling in a swoon when she was told that I must go over the sea upon a journey. She fell senseless, poor thing, and Kyward called out, 'Help ! help ! my aunt is in a swoon !' "

"Well," said Bellin gruffly, "he made as much noise

as though he were in danger of his life. I hate so much fuss about a trifle."

"Perhaps he was a little foolish," said Reynard. "But he is a timid creature, and very fond of his aunt. As for harm to Kyward, sooner than he should suffer anything in my house I would let my wife and children do so. Bellin, by the way, do you remember that the King and his Council bade me send them two letters before I left the country? I have them ready written. Will you be a good cousin, and carry them for me when you go?"

"I do not remember anything about it," grumbled the Ram. "And if you want me to carry letters you must give me something to carry them in, for I have no wallet."

"Of course you shall have something to carry them in, dear cousin," replied Reynard, in his most pleasing manner. "If nothing else can be found of a convenient size you shall have my own wallet, which I meant to carry on my pilgrimage. It will be a good day's work for you, let me tell you, for the King will be very grateful to you, I have no doubt. I will hang the wallet round your neck, Cousin Ram; it will be of no trouble to you, I am sure."

"Well, well," returned Bellin, "I have no objection to carrying them in that way. But make haste to fetch them, if you please, for I can wait no longer."

Reynard ran back into the castle, where he fetched Kyward's head, and stuffed it into his wallet, which he then fastened carefully.

"Here, dear cousin," cried he, returning. "Take this precious parcel with you, and do not look inside, whatever you do. I have done it up neatly and properly, and would not have it disarranged. This you may do if you

like—you may tell His Majesty that the letter is your own work, and that you took a vast deal of trouble to make it fitting for the King. He will give you thanks for it, and very likely some great reward, for it is an excellent letter."

Bellin began to feel less surly at these kind and generous words.

"Reynard," said he, "you are doing me a great kindness. I can neither read nor write, and it has stood in my way often that I am ignorant in these matters. Now I shall have praise at Court for having made such a fine letter. How often does one man benefit from another's wisdom! That is my lot now, and I am truly grateful to you for putting your wits at my service in this manner. I had better be going now. What of Kyward? Will he come now or later?"

"He will follow you," answered Reynard. "And I promise you he will show his face at Court very soon after you arrive there. He is talking with his aunt now, and I must hasten back, for I have some business to do before I leave, and some things to show Kyward which I may not trust to others."

"Farewell, then, Reynard," cried Bellin, and went forth in good spirits. So fast did he run that he very soon came again to Court, and found the King with his Barons in the hall of the Palace. They were all surprised to see him carrying the wallet of bearskin, and wondered what message he brought from Reynard.

"You are soon back, Sir Bellin," said the King. "Where did you leave the Fox? And why has he not taken his wallet with him?"

"Your Majesty," said Bellin, "I went with Reynard as far as his house, and waited there awhile to give him

counsel as to some letters he had promised to send you. I advised him about them, and am responsible for them, and I do not think your Majesty has ever seen finer letters in your life, though perhaps I should not boast, having prepared them myself. Reynard asked me to carry them to you, and lent me his wallet for the purpose, so I willingly agreed, though it is heavy to bear. But I would carry seven such burdens with pleasure for your Majesty's sake."

The King commanded Bokart, his secretary, to read the letters, for he knew all languages. Tybert the Cat and he together took the wallet off Bellin's neck, and the Ram waited for the praise he expected to receive when the fine letters were read. Alas! for poor foolish Bellin's pride, so soon to have a fall! Bokart undid the wallet, and put his paws in; then, drawing out Kyward's head, he gave a great cry of horror and astonishment.

"Woe is me!" cried he. "What sort of letters are these? See, my lord, this is the head of Kyward the Hare! What treachery is this?"

"Alas!" said the King, "that ever I believed in that Fox!" And he held down his head and kept silence in his grief and horror. The Queen, too, was speechless, and wept silently. Then the King raised his great voice and lamented so loudly that all the trees of the forest trembled, and the courtiers were filled with fear at the dread sound.

Then Sir Firapel the Leopard, who was akin to the Lion, drew near him, and spoke gently and soothingly.

"My Lord King," said he, "grieve not so terribly. What is this that it should so distress your Majesty? One would think the Queen herself were dead to hear you mourn! Put off this heavy sorrow, and be of good cheer.

Are you not King of all these lands, and can you not make your will obeyed in every place? What shall we do in this matter?"

"Sir Firapel," said the King sorrowfully, "how can I help grieving and mourning? This wicked and deceitful Fox has so managed me that I have ill-used my good subjects, the stout Bruin and Isegrim the Wolf, and let him go free. Is it not fitting that I should lament when I have done such things, and taken counsel of one so evil to punish my trusty friends? And my own wife has been the cause of it all. It was her prayers and entreaties that saved the rascal's life, and now it is too late to catch him again. Have I not cause enough to mourn?"

"How now, your Majesty," cried the Leopard, "can we not make amends for these mistakes? We can give good payment to Bruin the Bear for his skin that went to make the wallet for this traitor, and Isegrim the Wolf and his wife Dame Ursula for their shoes. Let Bellin the Ram be theirs to do with as they please. He has confessed himself that he counselled Kyward's death, and helped to make it sure. He must suffer the penalty. And we shall all go then to Malepardus to fetch Reynard, and shall arrest him and bring him here, and hang him without judgment or inquiry. So all will end well."

"Certainly you give wise counsel," said the King, somewhat cheered. "It shall be as you say. Go and set Bruin and Isegrim free, and bring them to me. They have suffered unjustly, and shall be rewarded well. Hearken, Sir Firapel. This shall be their payment. You shall tell them that I repent me sorely of my treatment of them, and I do give them as their just due Bellin the Ram and all his tribe from this day until

doomsday, that they may kill and eat them wherever they meet them—by field and forest, by hill and plain. Also, they have my royal permission to make war upon Reynard and his tribe from this day forth, to hunt and destroy at their pleasure and without forfeit. Go, carry the King's message swiftly. I have spoken."

Then went Sir Firapel the Leopard to the prison, where the Bear and the Wolf lay groaning in their heavy chains, and set them at liberty.

"Good sirs," said he, "I bring you your freedom and a message of love and friendship from the King. His Majesty has learned how unjust your punishment has been, and he is filled with grief and remorse. He bids me say that you shall have great rewards for all you have suffered. Bellin the Ram and all his lineage he gives to you and your tribes for ever, to bite and kill as it seems good to you. And, further, you shall make war upon Reynard and his family for all time, if you will, and suffer no penalty for it. Rejoice now, for your troubles are at an end."

Bruin the Bear and the Wolf Isegrim rejoiced greatly and made merry. But foolish Bellin suffered the penalty of falsehood and pride. Not his fair white coat only, but his life, was forfeit to the Bear and the Wolf, and to this very day they hold the privilege to hunt and destroy him and his tribe without let or hindrance from Lion the King, in times of peace as in times of war.

VIII

THE NEW COMPLAINTS AGAINST REYNARD

TO celebrate the setting free of Isegrim the Wolf and Bruin the Bear, the King made a great feast at Court for twelve days. To this feast came all manner of Beasts, for the King sent heralds to proclaim it all over the kingdom. There was not a merrier meeting in all the reign of Lion the King. There was singing by the Birds, and howling competitions among all the Cat tribes, from Sir Firamel and his lineage down to Tybert and the little people of his kin. The Spiders, who are great acrobats, did their tricks in the air, and the Pigeons tumbled before the crowd, and were greatly applauded. Every night all the Beasts together held a ball, and the hoof dance was danced with great merry-making, to music by the Frogs and Crickets, who are the minstrels of the marshlands and gardens. There was play-acting too, and tournaments of all kinds. It was indeed a time of mirth. All the Beasts and Birds came flocking to Court, from the greatest to the smallest. There was not one absent save the false red pilgrim Reynard the Fox, who for his own safety was better away.

After eight days there came an interruption to all this joyfulness. The King and Queen were sitting in state at the royal table, when there came to Court Laprel the Rabbit, making a sad noise, and with four wounds in his head. He sought audience, and told a grievous tale.

"My Lord King," he said, with weeping, "hear my

"Laprel the Rabbit told a grievous tale."

complaint against Reynard the Fox, and have pity upon me for all I have suffered at the hands of this cruel and ravenous murderer. I was running by his castle of Malepardus yesterday morning, and saw him standing there looking like a pilgrim just setting off upon a peaceable journey. I thought I should have passed quietly by him on my way toward this feast, and as I went on he came towards me with his head bent down and singing a hymn very sweetly. I saluted him, but he answered not a word, and just as we passed each other on the pathway, he turned upon me, and hit me several heavy blows upon the head and neck. I thought, indeed, that I was lost, but, thank Heaven, I am light of foot and very swift, and I escaped out of his hands, and left him raging and cursing that he had let me go so easily. I expect he thought that I should be an easy prey, and so he took the less trouble to hold me close. But though I escaped alive I did not get away unhurt. My wounds were so grievous that I thought I should have fainted and fallen, but fear kept me upon my feet and carried me beyond his reach. He sought to murder me, your Majesty. I pray you to have pity on me, and to punish him. There is no safety for peaceable folk while he runs free, neither by woodland nor heath, nor anywhere in the land."

Before the Rabbit had stopped speaking there was a flapping of wings, and the black Rook, Corbant, came flying in and perched before the King's chair.

"Dear lord and King," he croaked in piteous wise, "hear my complaint. This morning my wife Sharpbeak and I went out for a frolic upon the heath to have a hopping match, and there we saw Reynard the Fox lying on the ground as if he were dead. His eyes were shut

and his tongue hung a foot out of his mouth. He looked as dead as any beast could. We went and hopped gently upon his coat, and found no life nor movement in him. Then my poor wife went close to his mouth, and bent her head to listen and hear if he still breathed. It cost her her life, for the false Fox bided his time until she came close to his mouth, and then he opened his jaws and bit her head off. I screamed aloud in my grief, and cried: 'Alas! alas! what has happened?' And Reynard sprang to his feet, and would have slain me too, but I flew upon a tree out of reach. From there I saw how he tore and rent my dear wife's body with his great fierce teeth, and devoured her so greedily that he left nothing of her but a few little feathers. Then he went off, and I flew down and gathered up the feathers, and have brought them here to show your Majesty, and to beg your help to punish this cruel murderer. See, your Majesty, these little feathers are all that is left to me of my dear wife Sharp-beak! I have suffered such sorrow and fear as have wellnigh killed me outright. Sire, I demand that you do me justice in this matter! I cannot have my wife again, but her murderer must die for his sins. Those Kings who do not justice are no better than murderers themselves. For the honour of your house, you must avenge my wrongs!"

Thus cried and sobbed poor Corbant, whose grief was so terrible that he knew not half the words he spoke. The King was deeply moved and wroth at the tales of his two simple and peaceful subjects. His eyes flashed like fire, he frowned until his thick curling mane fell all about his face, and he roared aloud even more terribly than when he found the treachery of Reynard upon Kyward the Hare. All the Court trembled before his face

and shook in their shoes. It was a fearful sight. At last he spoke :

" By my crown and by the crown of my wife the Queen, these ill deeds shall be avenged. I will serve punishment upon Reynard the Fox that shall never be forgotten until all the Beasts of the world shall perish ! Hear, my people, what has befallen. My faith has been misused, my trust forsworn. This false, wicked Fox deceived me, and made himself out to be full of repentance and desire to amend his ways. I gave him a wallet and staff, and sent him forth upon a pilgrimage to do penance for all his misdeeds. You saw how he went, humbly as it seemed. Oh, the false traitor ! How he has deceived me, and betrayed my trust and confidence ! Alas for the day that I put my trust in a woman's counsel ! This is all my wife's doing. She persuaded me, and I took her advice when I had done better to hang and destroy this wicked beast. My people, all of you hear me. I command you all, as you value my friendship, that you take counsel with me how to avenge these cruel wrongs. Not until Reynard the Fox is brought to justice shall I have peace in my heart, or cease to feel shame that such things have come to pass as you have heard of to-day."

The King's face and voice were so terrible that none dared make any answer. Isegrim the Wolf and Bruin the Bear most of all longed for revenge upon Reynard, but even they dared not utter a word. At last the Queen spoke, and so afraid was she that she spoke French, which was not her own language. Here in good English are the words she used, as Bokart, the King's secretary, set them down for all to read :

" Dear husband and King, methinks you are over-hasty in condemning Reynard unheard. It is good law that

all ill-doers shall be brought to court and examined on their ill deeds before they receive judgment. Those who are accused must bring their excuses and tell their own side of the story, as well as those who accuse them. It is well known that many have sworn falsely against their enemies before now; therefore none should be judged unheard. I did indeed recommend Reynard the Fox to your mercy, after hearing both sides of the case, and I may have been wrong in so doing, but that remains to be proved. It is the King's part to see justice done in all fairness, and to have the law respected. The Fox must be tried before he is found guilty of these new crimes."

"My lord," said Firapel the Leopard, "the Queen gives wise counsel, and speaks truly concerning the law. May I beg your Majesty to consult the Barons, as you have ever done in such cases, and abide by their advice? Certainly Reynard must be brought to judgment, and if he is found guilty he must suffer the penalty. But if he returns himself before this feast is ended and proves his innocence, then he must go free. If he were twice as false as he seems to be by these sad tales, still, he should be fairly dealt with and put upon his trial publicly."

"Sir Firapel," said the grey Wolf Isegrim, "we are all agreed in this matter. It cannot be better settled than as you say, by the King's leave. At the same time, though Reynard were here now and could clear himself of these charges, yet I would venture to say that he deserves hanging on other accounts. But as he is not here to defend himself, I will say no more. Only I would remind the King of his lies about the treasure at Husterloo. That they were lies I do not doubt for an instant. He has tried to deceive us all, from the King downwards. And he has done great mischief to me and to the Bear,

who are true subjects of King Lion. He is a robber and a highway thief. No one goes by his house in safety. Nevertheless, Sir Firapel, what pleases the King and his Council, that must be done. But Reynard himself could be here if he chose to plead his cause, for the King's messengers went all through the land with news of this feast."

"All you say is sensible, good Leopard," answered the King. "Reynard shall be sent for to come and give account of himself before us. And all those of my people who owe me service and are eager for the honour of my house and the peace of these realms shall make themselves ready for war at the end of six days' truce. Let them have ready all their guns, bows, and all things for battle, both for horsemen and footmen. After six days, if Reynard comes not, we will besiege Malepardus. I vow I will destroy the Fox if I am King of these lands. What do you say, my lords and gentlemen here assembled? Will you come with me on this adventure with a good will?"

"That will we, O King!" cried they all. "When you say the word, we will follow you. Long live the King!"

Now Grimbart the Badger, who was Reynard's sister's son, stood by and heard all these things, and anger and fear came into his heart. He made up his mind that he would warn Reynard, for the Beasts are very loyal to their kin, and always ready to defend them in times of trouble. Forth he went, then, without waiting a moment, and as he journeyed he sorrowed for his uncle and thought kindly of him. "Alas! poor uncle," said he to himself, "what danger you are in now! I shall either see you an exile, driven out of the land to beg your food in foreign countries, or brought to Court and hanged before my eyes. Well may I weep to see the head of our house brought so

low. My uncle Reynard was always good to me, and ready to help his kin in their need, wise of counsel, and clever beyond all Beasts."

Thus sorrowing came Grimbart to Malepardus. His uncle Reynard stood by the door with two young pigeons, whom he found trying to fly for the first time. Because their wing feathers were not fully grown they had fallen to the ground, where Reynard had spied them as he went hunting, and caught them and brought them home. When he saw Grimbart he hailed him in a very friendly way, and beckoned him to come into the castle.

"Welcome, my best beloved nephew!" he cried. "Of all my kindred I would rather see you than any other. Are you coming to see me? You have been running fast. What is all this haste for? Have you any news for me?"

"Dear uncle," answered Grimbart sadly, "I have news, and bad news, too, I grieve to say. You are in very great danger. The King has sworn to kill you and put you to shame. He has commanded all his people to come here and besiege Malepardus in six days' time. They will be upon you in a short time—archers, footmen, horsemen, and waggons full of folk all eager for your life. There are guns being got ready, and bows and arrows, and every sort of fighting weapon, and torches to burn your house about your ears. The King has taken Isegrim and Bruin into his confidence, and loves them better than ever you loved me. Anything they advise is done straightway. Isegrim has persuaded him that you are a murderer and thief; he hates you and would do you all the ill he knows how to do. Laprel the Rabbit and Corbant the Rook have also laid complaints against you. I am terribly afraid for you, Uncle Reynard; it seems to me that your life hangs by a thread."

"Poof!" said the Fox. "What a pack of nonsense is all this! Have you finished yet, or is there some more to tell? That is the whole, is it? Well, nephew, you have more heart than head. It is kindly meant of you to weep over me, but I would advise you to wait for a better reason for tears. Cheer up! If the King and his Court have sworn my death, what matter? Vows do not kill, that ever I heard. I flatter myself I am a good deal more than the equal of all that pack of silly chatterers. Besides that, they have no real mind to kill me. If I were dead, who would be left wise enough to give counsel in difficult times? Come, nephew, stop lamenting until you have some cause for it. See what I have here for a feast. You shall join our dinner. Are these not good fat birds? Feel how well their bones are covered! And the bones themselves are no harder than gristle. They are as easy to eat as the meat. I love nothing better than a fat pigeon, and it will do me good to eat something tender and young. Now, Grimbart, come along. Your aunt will receive you very gladly. But tell her none of your foolish tales. She is always ready to fall into a fright over nothing. She has a tender heart, like your own. To-morrow we will go together to Court, and I warrant you I shall settle matters quickly enough when it comes to speech-making. Will you stand by me as one friend should by another?"

"Indeed, uncle," answered Grimbart, "that I will. Anything I can do for you I will do."

"Well said, nephew. I thank you for your friendship. Perhaps some day I may be able to reward you for it; who knows?"

"Uncle," said the Badger, "you may come to Court safely whenever you please. The Queen and the Leopard

have decided that. As long as you are on your promise to serve the King loyally, no one may touch you."

"That is good hearing," returned the Fox cheerfully. "If that is so, I do not care a straw for all their vows and threats. They can do me no harm."

Thus talking they entered into Malepardus, and along the passages until they came to a burrow where Dame Ermeline was sitting with her children. They all greeted Grimbart with great friendliness, and he saluted them with affection. The two fat pigeons were rent into pieces, and each one had his share, which was but a small one, after all, for the children were well grown, and had as good appetites as their father.

When the meal was over, Reynard asked his cousin what he thought of the two children, Russel and Reynardine.

"Are they not fine whelps, eh, nephew?" said he. "They will do our family credit, you will see. Already they are a sturdy pair of little hunters. Russel can catch a chicken, and Reynardine can slay a hen, and they can both of them swim and dive in the water after lapwings and ducks. I would send them hunting, but they are young yet, and foolhardy. They must learn first how to avoid traps and hunters and hounds. I have somewhat to teach them before they go out to get provender for the house. If they were as wise in all ways as they are in some, we should live in great plenty. They take after me, though, and it is pretty to see how they learn to deceive. They will smile and look friendly upon their prey, and seem to be thinking of nothing but innocent frolic, and when they have got close enough they will catch and kill them in the most delightful way. It is the Fox nature to be sly and swift, and I am very proud

of these two pups. What do you think of them, Grimbart ?"

"You may well be proud of them, uncle," said the Badger. "They are wise pups, and I am proud of them too, for I am of near kin to them."

So they talked pleasantly together, and rested awhile, and then the Fox suggested that they should lie down and sleep. The Badger agreed, for he was weary from his journey, and when they all lay down cosily among the straw, he and Dame Ermeline and the children were soon slumbering soundly. But Reynard was too anxous to sleep. For all his brave words, he knew he was in sore danger, and he tossed and turned as he lay thinking and planning what stories he could tell at Court.

Early the next morning Reynard and Grimbart set forth from Malepardus. But before they started the Fox bade a loving farewell to Dame Ermeline and the little ones.

"Grieve not, dear wife," said he, "nor be afraid if I am long away. I must needs go with Grimbart, and I cannot say whether our business will be long or short. But keep up a brave and cheerful heart, and if you hear any bad tidings, do not believe them. Look after yourself and the children, and keep the house in good order. I will do the best I can to come back quickly, but I have some stiff work before me."

"Alas, husband!" cried the poor dame. "What possesses you to go to Court again after your last experience there ? You said you never would go there any more when you came back to me this time, having only just escaped with your life from your enemies."

"This is a strange world, good wife, where many unexpected things happen," answered Reynard sagely.

"We plan one thing, and something quite different comes to pass. So it has happened this time. I thought never to go to Court again, and lo! I find nothing will serve but to be off immediately. But there is nothing to fuss about; I shall be back within five days at longest. Mean while, be merry."

Upon which he took Grimbart by the arm, and together they left the castle and proceeded on their way to Court.

When they came out upon the heath Reynard began to recount his late deeds to his nephew, and to lament his sins, as he had done on his last journey to the Palace.

"Nephew," said he, "I have a great deal upon my conscience, and am very sorrowful because of my misdeeds So soon as I repent, it seems to me, I begin upon some new evil. There is certainly something the matter with me Since I last told over my sins to you I have done several very unpleasant things, and the memory of them makes my heart heavy. It will ease it somewhat if I talk them over with you. I did poor Bruin an ill turn the other day when I got a piece of his fur to make me a wallet. It was an unkind trick I played him. And I served Isegrim and his wife no better, for, as you know, I got their shoes for my pilgrimage. Moreover, I told the King a great many lies, and got him to forgive me by pretending that the Wolf and Bear were his enemies. I said they tried to betray and kill him by a great plot, and I made up a fine tale about hidden treasure at Husterloo. It was all lies, Grimbart, but I was sorely pressed, you may remember Then I led Bellin the Ram and Kyward the Hare back with me, and slew Kyward, and sent his head back by Bellin as an insult to the King. I struck the Rabbit over the head so hard that I very

nearly killed him; indeed, if he had not been so swift on his feet I should have finished him off. He escaped from me by no will of mine, poor fellow! The Rook Corbant, too, has a grievance against me, for I swallowed his silly little wife when she came flapping round me on the heath. Alas! I have remembered a worse sin still! I had forgotten it till this very minute, but I will tell you about it now, nephew. In truth it was very wrong in me, and it weighs on me more than all the rest now I have brought it to mind. It was like this: I was walking with the Wolf in the fields between Holthurst and Elverding, when we saw a red Mare with a black Foal of about four months old running at her side. It was a good fat one, and I hungered after it, and poor Isegrim was nearly starved, and begged me to go and ask the Mare if she would sell it to him. Well, I could not refuse him, could I? I went to the Mare, and spoke to her, and said: 'Dame, will you sell us your Foal?' 'Certainly,' said she, 'if you will give my price for it.' 'What is that?' I asked. Then she looked very shrewdly at me, and said the price was written on her hind-foot, and if I was anything of a scholar I could read it for myself. I knew what she meant then, and what I should get if I went prying after her foot, so I said no, I was no scholar, and could not read, and also I did not want the child myself, but Isegrim had sent me to inquire the price of it. The Mare said: 'Let him come himself, then, and I will show it to him.' So I ran back to Isegrim and told him that the Mare was anxious to sell her Foal to him and had written the price on her foot, but I could not read it, for I was never at school, I was grieved to say, and had not learned my letters. 'Go and buy it, uncle,' I said; 'that is, if you can read.' 'How now, nephew?' said he.

'Of course I can read. Why not? I can read French, Latin, English, and Dutch,' and he went on to tell me so much about his learning as I have no time to repeat: how he had been to Oxford, and taken high place there, and discoursed with men learned in the law, and sat in the courts to hear difficult cases tried, and taken degrees in law himself, and goodness knows what else, according to his own account. When he was tired of telling me all about his own cleverness, he asked me to wait for him while he went off to the Mare to bargain with her. I waited, chuckling to myself, to see what would happen, and, of course, it was as I supposed. When he was close by to read the price upon her foot, she lifted it up and let drive at his head. He fell down stunned, and lay there so long that a man might have ridden a mile before he came to, while the Mare trotted off with her Colt, well pleased. Then I went up to Isegrim to tease him, as I cannot help doing sometimes. I asked him a hundred things: how much of the Colt had he eaten? and how much was to be my share for waiting so patiently? and whether the reading was easy or difficult? and if it was in prose or rhyme? and so on, until he nearly died of vexation. I said: 'I think it must have been written in song, for I heard you sing loudly, dear uncle!' And so I teased him until he wept, and begged me to give up my taunts, for he was sorely wounded. How he howled! 'I thought the nails in her hoof were letters,' he said, 'and she drove every one of them into my head. I will never read such letters again, I vow!' I made great pretence of surprise, and would not believe him at first, and then I said that I had often heard that the most learned people were not the wisest, and so it seemed to be. I had often heard that people who read so much in

books were silly in other matters, and brought themselves into great difficulties through paying attention to nothing but learning. Poor Isegrim! I gave him a bad time, besides nearly causing his death by indulging my sense of fun. Well, nephew, I have told you all the sins I remember now. Whatever may happen to me at Court (and who can say which way the wind may blow?) I have at least the comfort of feeling that I have owned to my sins honestly, and that is more than many sinners can say."

"Uncle," said Grimbart gravely, "your sins are indeed bad ones, and I am grieved and shocked to hear them, especially the story of Kyward's head. It was an evil trick to kill that harmless beast, and to send his poor head to the King, whom you had deceived with such lies and flattery."

"Ah, nephew," sighed the Fox, "these things will happen as we go up and down the world. And there is this to be said: How would the judges know anything about sins if they had not done a few wrong things themselves? It is almost necessary to do wrong sometimes that one may understand the temptations that come to others. As for me, I often have the most terrible prickings of conscience, and repent deeply of my sins. And what more can one do? Just now I am feeling so good and high-minded that I cannot bear the very idea of my vile tricks. I only wish to live honestly, and work hard, and do good. I often feel like this, and then, pouf! it all flies away, and I am ready for any mischief again! I expect you are just the same, and so are most people. The world is full of temptations, and it is much easier to give way to them than to be always quiet and well-behaved. People talk very finely, to be sure, but some of those who preach most are the first to forget their

good rules when they have the chance to do so. And I have had to tell lies sometimes merely to get on in the world. Look how well I did for myself at Court this time, and all because my lies were such big ones! Everyone makes mistakes sometimes, and in the business of Kyward's head I erred, and spoiled all the good work I had done."

"Dear uncle," said the foolish Badger, quite overwhelmed by so much argument, "you are certainly full of extraordinary worldly wisdom. I never heard anything like it before; it passes my understanding completely. I always knew you were wise, but you have argued to-day until I am bewildered. You must be even cleverer than I thought you were!"

Thus talking they pursued their way, the Fox feeling heavy at heart, but never letting Grimbart guess at his fears. He stalked along with dignity and held his head high, so that all the folk they passed would have thought him a great personage. Grimbart walked closed beside him with cheering words.

"Now, uncle, be of good heart," said he. "Be brave, and you will win, as you did before. Fortune favours the brave, is an old saying."

And Reynard thanked him graciously for his sympathy and good advice, and walked along still more proudly, and looked at everyone as fiercely as he knew how.

IX

Reynard's Answer

IN due time they arrived at Court, and Reynard saw there many of his kin, and others who wished him no good. The Otter, the Beaver, and many others were there, with all those against whom he had trespassed before and whom he had outwitted by his subtlety and lies. But among them he had a few relations and friends who loved him still. Reynard made no delay upon arriving. He went straight towards the King, and, kneeling down, began his excuses in firm tones and fearlessly, and at great length, as his custom was.

"My Lord King," said he, "I hear there are complaints against me, and that you would inquire into the truth of them. I can only say that I agree most heartily with your Majesty in this matter. Liars and traitors, and those who try to take away their friend's good name, should always be brought to justice, and this inquiry will see that justice is done upon them. I wish that your Majesty could read my heart and the hearts of all here, and see who is faithful and who false. I think your Majesty knows how truly I am your servant and subject, and how I would serve and honour you all my life. It is this very faithfulness of mine that has brought trouble upon me. Envious ones tell lies of me, and hate me because I am trusted by the King. Well, I can safely leave my character in your Majesty's hands, and in those of our gracious Queen. I know your wisdom will not

be easily led astray and blinded by false tales and deceitful persons. I ask for justice, your Majesty. I come to be tried before you, and proved guilty or not guilty, as you may find me. No one can desire more than justice. I shall not suffer by this trial. Before I leave Court again justice will be done, and all shall know what I am, and what I have in my heart. I am not one who can deceive and flatter ; I always say what I think openly."

Everyone stared to hear Reynard speak so stoutly, and there was a great silence in the Court. But the King looked gravely upon Reynard, and answered him in no gentle voice.

"What, Sir Fox," said he, "you think by bold language to deceive us again, do you ? But I tell you you have made excuse once too often. I have little doubt that matters will be settled to-day by seeing you hanged. I have no wish to preach and scold. You know best what you deserve. The sooner it is all over the better for you. What sort of love you have towards us you have showed by your treatment of our subjects, the Rabbit and the Rook. Your falseness and wickedness have brought their own punishment upon you. A pitcher may go to the well for years, but at last it comes home broken. I think your pitcher has served you long enough, and had better be broken without delay."

"Alack !" thought the Fox, on hearing such grave words. "Things are worse than I thought with me. I wish I were at this moment anywhere but here !" And he racked his brains for some answer which should turn the King's anger to kindliness. Aloud he spoke no less firmly :

"My Lord King, I beg that you will hear all I have to say before you come to any decision in this matter. It is only fair to do so. Though I were certain of punish-

ment, yet ought your Majesty to hear my side of the case. Many times have I advised you well and wisely, and to good purpose, when the other Beasts have been afraid to speak their minds and have slunk away in silence. If you heard me to your own advantage, now I beg you will hear me to mine. If evil Beasts have complained falsely against me, ought I not to speak out and say the truth? But a short while ago I should have been heard before the others and my word taken before theirs, but now it seems that all this is changed. Your Majesty, old deeds should be remembered, and for the sake of my old counsels you will hear me now. I see near you many of my friends and kinsmen, my Lord King, who, though they may disagree with me at times, yet would suffer deeply if I should come to an undeserved death at your Majesty's hands. For my own part, I can honestly say that if I am slain now, your Majesty will lose in me the truest and most faithful servant in all this realm. Do you think, my lord, that if I knew myself to be guilty of breaking your laws I should have come here so openly among all my enemies? Nay, Sir King, no guilty Beast would do so for all the wealth in the world. I was free and at large; what need had I to put myself into prison? Nay, I thank Heaven I have so good a conscience that I can without fear come to Court and hear all these charges that are brought against me, and answer them honestly and without shame. When Grimbart came to me, I would have come with him at once but that the shock of the ill news was too much for me. I went out weeping upon the heath, and knew not what to do for sorrow. Had I been wiser I might have come without delay, but I was too sad for worldly wisdom. As I went sorrowing it chanced that I met my uncle Martin the Ape, who is

wiser than any Beast in good counsel—he has been legal adviser to the Bishop for nine years. When he saw my distress, he fell to asking the cause. 'Dear cousin,' said he, 'I fear you are in trouble; your heart is heavy; you walk as one in deep sorrow. Who has wounded or done ill to you? Such troubles should always be confided to friends. A true friend is often of more help to a man in need and sorrow than his own wits. For when trouble weighs upon the mind it dulls the understanding, and one cannot think clearly or attempt to understand matters with coolness and judgment.' 'Dear uncle,' I said, 'you speak truly, for such is my sad case. I am accused of what I have never done. I am in great and undeserved distress. For one who has been always my trusted and well-loved friend, Laprel the Rabbit, has turned upon me and speaks evil of me since yesterday morning, when he came to my house and found me sitting there quietly. He told me he was on his way to Court, and we saluted each other and were the best of friends, and then he asked if I would give him something to eat, for he was hungry and weary from his journey. Of course, I offered him all I had, which, as it happened, was simple fare. I gave him two rolls of fresh white bread with plenty of sweet butter, and methinks that is a good enough breakfast for any traveller. Well, he ate until he could eat no more, and when he was full my poor little son Russel, my youngest, came creeping in, and would have taken the pieces he had left. You know what children are,' I said to my uncle Martin; 'they are always hungry and ready for a fresh meal. Will you believe it, dear uncle, the Rabbit turned upon him and hit him straight upon the mouth, and the poor child fell down half fainting. When my eldest child, Reynardine,

saw that, he sprang at the Rabbit and caught him by the head, and would have killed him if I had not come to the rescue and saved him. And not only that, but I beat my child full sore for his treatment of a guest. And yet Laprel went off to Court and complained to the King that I had half murdered him! Thus does gratitude show itself in this world. I might surely have complained of his cruelty to my little son, but I said nothing, and he brings a false charge against me! Then came Corbant the Rook to me weeping and lamenting as he flew. I asked him what ailed him, and he said that his wife was dead. She found a piece of meat that had poisoned her and killed her. I would have asked more, but he would not say another word, and flew away croaking. The next thing I heard was that he had accused me of biting and slaying his wife!' I asked my uncle how that could be true. She flies and I go afoot; she was in the air and I upon the ground. Is it possible that I should catch her as she flew? I said I had good reason for tears and sorrow. Perhaps these trials are sent for a good cause, and I ought to suffer them gladly. But my uncle Martin said it was unjust and unfair, and that I should go to Court and explain matters to the lords, and show them my innocence. I told him how that was impossible, for I was bound upon a pilgrimage and was under promise to your Majesty to go to Rome before I came hither again. I said, 'I am beset on every side, and have nothing but troubles and sorrows. My friends, that owe me gratitude and kindliness, show nothing but cruelty and treachery towards me. I dare not go to Court, for liars will swear against me, and how shall I prove my innocence against so many evil Beasts?' I spoke hopelessly, for I was bewildered with grief at finding myself

so mistrusted and deceived. But the Ape, my uncle, spoke very kindly, and bade me not to be afraid. 'Nay, cousin,' said he, 'keep a brave heart, and believe that justice must always be done and evil-doers found out in their craft and guile.' Your Majesty, I come hither on his advice; he bade me go to Court and speak up boldly. He told me to inquire there for his wife, my Aunt Rukenaw, with her two sisters and their three children, and many others of our kin. He told me that they would speak for me, and not suffer me to be unjustly punished. He said that meanwhile he would go to Rome for me, and speak there to his friends and allies—Simon, Wayte, Scathe, Prentout, and others. 'A true friend will give his fortune and his life in a friend's cause,' he said, 'and these will I adventure for your sake if need be.' And he spoke other comforting words, and was so tender and wise that I lost my fear and become joyful, and laughed aloud. So I came hither in great gladness, believing his word that the King will never be deceived nor see justice and right abused. My Lord King, I am here, as you see, and have told you all the truth. If there are any here who accuse me and can prove their words, let me be punished for all I am found guilty of. I only ask for justice. If I am wrong, I will make amends according to the law of this land, which has ever been my guide in all matters. And if need be I will meet any enemy who will challenge me to open combat, and he who wins shall have the right to live in freedom and honour. Can I say more? All my life I have respected the laws, and they shall have nothing but respect from me so long as I live."

There was a greater silence than before when Reynard ceased speaking. All the Beasts, rich and poor, great and small, remained dumb. Corbant the Rook and

Laprel the Rabbit were stricken with fear at hearing the Fox so turn the tables upon them, and fled without another word. When they were far from the Court, and not till then, did they open their lips.

"May this wicked Reynard be punished for his falseness!" cried Laprel. "Whatever he says, he can make it appear to be true. He so wraps up his lies that none can see them for what they are!"

"True, friend Rabbit," answered the Rook mournfully. "How can we witness against him? We are helpless before him. It is safer to give way at once and leave the place than to attempt to stand up against his wicked cleverness. Whether he argue or fight we shall be beaten. There is no hope for us against the Fox."

At Court Isegrim and Bruin bewailed together when Reynard's two enemies went away so suddenly, for they feared that no one would now dare to make any complaint against him.

The King, after a little while, raised his voice and called out: "If anyone has a complaint to make, let him come forward. Yesterday, when Reynard was away, there were many to speak against him: where are they now, when the Fox is among us?"

"My lord," said Reynard, "there are many who will tell lies behind one's back who dare not do so to one's face. Witness the complaints of Laprel the Rabbit and Corbant the Rook! They were ready enough to swear evil against me when I was away, but now I am here they fly before me and dare not speak. Ah, your Majesty, if such false tales were easily believed, how often would the innocent suffer! But I am above such low deceivers, and fear them not. Nevertheless, such are my love and faithfulness to your Majesty, that if you had bidden me

to make apology to them, I would have done so in all humility. Though they have sinned against me, I would forgive them, for I cannot live in enmity and warfare with my fellow-creatures."

"Reynard," said the King, "your words are fair, but methinks your heart is not as you would show it to us. These things you say: where is the proof of them? This that I have against you is proved, and it is a matter of life and death. Did I not pardon you on your promise that you would go on a pilgrimage to repent of your sins, and give you a wallet and staff and good shoes for the purpose? And yet you sent me, by Bellin the Ram, Kyward's head in the very wallet I gave you. What could have been worse than this cowardly deed? How dared you so insult your King? Do you know of any more cruel and insolent action than to send to a master the head of his servant? You cannot deny the charge, for Bellin the Ram, who was faithful and true, though weak and wrong-doing, has told it all word for word. Such reward as was his you shall have in your turn, if justice is to be done indeed."

Then did the Fox's heart fail him, and for grief and fear he was stricken dumb. He was at his wits' end and could think of nothing more to say. All round him he saw friends and kinsmen, yet none who would speak a word in his favour. He grew as pale as death, and cast piteous looks upon them, but none stirred to help him.

"Ah, thou false one!" said the King. "Canst thou not answer? Hast thou no tale to tell? Art thou silent at last?"

"Alack!" thought the unhappy Fox. "Now is my last hour come." But he spoke not, and sighed deeply, so that Isegrim and Bruin rejoiced to hear him.

X

REYNARD'S FURTHER ANSWER

AME RUKENAW, Martin the Ape's wife, heard all that passed, and was ill-pleased. She was the Queen's friend and adviser, and it seemed to her that the King was too ready to act against his wife's judgment. It was fortunate for Reynard that she was there, for she was both brave and wise and a fluent speaker as well. She had many friends and admirers wherever she went.

"My Lord King," said she, coming forward, "it does not become your high state that you should show anger when you sit in judgment. A judge must put away all such feelings, and think only of how to do justice rightly and without fear or favour. I may speak thus, for I am learned in the law, and know it better than many who wear furred gowns and are called wise. I lived long among learned folk, and whenever I chose to speak, there was silence for me. I was listened to because I knew the law so well, having learned it from books and men. If everyone who stands here to-day were to bethink himself how many times he has done wrong himself, Reynard would be shown more mercy and pity. Let everyone know himself—that is my counsel. There are none who are not in danger of falling, no matter how securely they stand, and the best among us does wrong at times. If a man has never sinned, then he need never repent; but if he sins and repents, then he should be forgiven. To persist in wrong-doing is evil, but to sorrow for it is righteous. We are taught not to accuse people falsely. I

think there are many here who had better accuse themselves than a poor prisoner. If none should accuse Reynard but those who could plainly prove their tale, he would not do badly—mark my words. Let every man first correct his own faults, and then he may have time to accuse others if he will, but I think he will not be so ready then to call down vengeance upon his neighbours when he sees how easy it is to do wrong, and how the innocent may trespass without any wish to do evil. Reynard my cousin and his kin have always been high about the King, and in favour and honour with him, above Isegrim and Bruin. And they have more friends everywhere, and so had Reynard's father and grandfather, than ever the Bear and Wolf people can boast of. Things seem to be turned upside down in these days, when false traitors and liars and schemers become great and highly honoured, and lords and gentlemen who are true and of high and noble birth are cast down and despised. Such injustice may not be long suffered."

"Dame," answered the King, "if Reynard had done the same things to you as he has done to others of this Court, I think you would not be so ready to find him innocent and just in all his dealings. How can you wonder that I am angered against him? He has broken his vow to be a peaceful and faithful subject in all this realm. He has committed theft and treason and murder, beyond doubt. What makes you trust him so stoutly? What reason have you for believing him to be honest and true? There is no one else who has a good word for him. However much you praise him, you will come to the same opinion in the end. He has not one friend who will say a word for him or do anything to help him, and he has brought it all upon himself. He deserves no

sympathy, and he gets none. I have listened to your words with more and more astonishment. I have never before heard of any that were comrades of Reynard's whom he has not turned upon in time and treated wickedly."

The She-Ape answered: "My lord, it is true that I love Reynard and know nothing ill of him. Also, I know of one good deed which he did in your presence, for which you owe him untold thanks. Though the scales are turned at present, yet the heaviest shall in the end weigh most. These are the rules of life: we should love our friends in reason, and hate no one. To be steadfast and constant is right and just. I will tell you a tale of a Man and a Serpent, to show how justice may be done in strange ways, and how circumstances alter cases. Two years ago there came to this Court for judgment a Man and a Serpent, and this was the tale they had to tell. The Serpent in trying to pass through a hedge was caught by the neck in a snare, and held so fast that he must have died there if no help had come to him. Then the Man came by, and the Serpent cried out for help to him. 'Save me, good Man, or I shall choke and die in this snare!' 'If you will promise not to bite nor harm me in any way, and to keep your poison to yourself, I will help you out,' said the Man, taking pity on his plight. 'I vow and swear it shall be so,' answered the Serpent. So the Man set to work, and after struggling with the cruel snare, he got the Serpent safely out of it and set him free, and they journeyed on their way together in friendship. But the pangs of hunger soon attacked the Serpent, for he had not eaten for a long time, and was weakened by his sufferings in the snare, so that he longed for a nourishing meal. And when they became very violent indeed,

he made ready to strike and slay his companion. The Man sprang away from the blows and escaped, crying out upon the Serpent: 'What, have you forgotten your oath that you would do me no harm? Is it for this that I have saved you out of the snare?' 'Hunger is a hard master,' answered the Serpent; 'it may cause a man to break his oath.' 'You may have good enough reason to obey hunger,' said the Man, 'but I must understand it also. Let us take our time over this matter and settle it justly.' 'So be it,' said the Serpent, and they journeyed onwards. Presently they met Tisellin the Raven with his son Slinopere, and told them their story. Now, Tisellin was also hungry, and thought he and his son might join in the feast, so he gave it as his opinion that the Serpent would be justified in slaying the Man. 'How now, good Man?' asked the Serpent. 'What do you say? I am judged to be in the right. You agree?' 'Nay,' said the Man. 'Indeed I do not agree. This Tisellin is a robber himself, and has no sense of justice. He is only one, too, and none can be judged by one only. There must be two or three at least to try the case, and they should not be evil-doers, but men learned in the law and of good life.' So they went on farther until they met with the Bear and the Wolf, to whom they told the tale again. And they also said that the Serpent ought to be allowed to slay the Man, for to plead hunger was reason enough for breaking any oath. Then the Serpent leaped again upon the man, and would have slain him then and there; but the Man in his terror sprang far from him, and cried again loudly that the Serpent had no right to touch him. 'I spared your life,' he said, 'and would you now not spare mine? It is a wicked thought.' 'It has been judged twice that I may slay you,' answered the

Serpent. 'What more would you have?' 'The judgments of robbers and murderers are of no account,' said the Man. 'Those whose lives are lawless cannot administer the law rightly. I insist that this matter be brought before our Lord the King and his Court to be tried properly. You cannot refuse this, and, whatever sentence they pass, we will abide by without question.' 'That is a good idea,' said the Bear and the Wolf, and the Serpent agreed that it sounded wise. (Your Majesty may see that your subjects agree always that you will do justice upon them, without favour or unfairness.) So the whole party came to the Court before the King, With the Wolf came his two children, Eatall and Neverfull. who were so called because they were for ever seeking for food. They howled upon the Man, and would have torn him to pieces if they had been allowed. But the King was angry with them for their greed, and banished them, so the Wolf and the Bear, the Raven and his son, stood with the Serpent and the Man to hear justice done. First the Man spoke, and showed his case: how he had set free the Serpent, who now owed his life to his good services; how the Serpent had vowed to do him no harm at any time, and had broken his vow and thought to slay and devour him. And he called upon the King to show if that were right dealing and honest behaviour. Next the Serpent gave his account of the matter, and showed that he had done no wrong; for if he had no food he would die, and to save life one may break an oath and not do evil.

"My Lord King, I remember that your Majesty and your Council were greatly puzzled by these two sides of the question. You saw that it was not right to let a Man suffer for so good a deed as this one had done, and you were grieved to see his trouble and sorrow. Yet you

saw that the Serpent was also in the right, for to save life any vow may be broken without sin. There was no one in all the Court who knew what to say. Many wished the Man to be helped, and yet they could not tell which side was in the right of the matter. Then your Majesty called upon Reynard the Fox, my nephew, the wise counsellor, to come and give his advice upon the matter. In those days the Fox was rightly held in honour as the wisest and most subtle of all the lords of the realm. Your Majesty said that he should judge of the case, being learned above all in the law, and that all should obey what he said should be done. So Reynard spoke and said that it was not possible to decide the matter upon hearsay, for in evidence it is not always the truth that is told. 'Let me see the Serpent as he was when the Man found him,' he said, 'in peril of death and helpless; then I shall be better able to judge of the merits of the case.' Your Majesty consented, and said that no plan could be better than this, and all the Court agreed with you. So you all went to the hedge where the Serpent and the Man first met, and there the Serpent was placed again in the snare, as Reynard decreed he should be. And your Majesty spoke and asked the Fox what he now thought, and what judgment should be given. Reynard answered them: 'My Lord King, here is the beginning of the matter before us. The Man and the Serpent are now in the same place as when they first met: they have neither won nor lost. It rests with the Man whether he will again set the Serpent free or if he will leave him bound in the snare. If he likes to set him loose upon the same promises that he had from him before, then may he do so; but if he fears that for any reason the Serpent may feel bound to break his oath, as he felt bound before to do, then may he

leave him where he is. The judgment is with the Man to do whichever he chooses.' Then your Majesty and all the Court cried out that Reynard was right and just, and the wisdom of the Fox was praised on all sides. He had dealt fairly in the matter, and had not called your Majesty's law and honour in question, but had settled things wisely and well. When did the Bear or the Wolf ever do your Majesty a service so great? They live well and enjoy themselves, and care for nothing but their own ease and comfort. They steal and devour everywhere, and slay and murder horses and cattle, and then they give sentence on little folk who take only chickens and small fowls for food for their hungry children. They think it matters not what they do: they may live as they will, but others may not even satisfy their children's needs. They give themselves the airs of Solomon and Aristotle, and all the wise men of old; they expect to be honoured and praised and held in high esteem; but where there is hard work to be done you will not find them. The simple folk may do the work and they will take the reward. They plunder and destroy both castles and cottages; they prey upon the poor and lay the land waste before them. They care not whose house they set on fire if they want to warm themselves at the blaze of it. They think only how they may get gain for themselves at the expense of all others. But Reynard the Fox and all his kin are faithful subjects to your Majesty. They seek first their master's profit and honour, and endanger their own lives for their lord. What thanks has Reynard got for all his services to the King and his country? Your Majesty has said that the Fox's kin love him not, that his friends will not speak for him, that he is distrusted and hated by his own people. I would that

not your Majesty, but some other person, had said those hard words. Reynard's friends would punish him so that he would bewail them all his life. But your Majesty may say what you will. You are our King, and if anyone should say one word against you, we would slay him without mercy. We of the Fox's kin are true subjects, and where there is fighting we are not wont to be afraid or away. My lord, we are all ready to give up wealth and even life for our kinsman Reynard. I am a wife, but I would give up home and happiness to serve him. I have three fair children, whom I would not scruple to send to war for his sake, though I had rather die than see a hair of their heads destroyed, so dearly do I love them. My eldest is a merry boy called Bitelet. He has earned many good meals by his fun and singing in lords' houses. My second is Fulromp, and my third is a daughter, Hatenet. They are all good and dear children, who love each other and are everything to me."

Thus speaking, Dame Rukenaw turned round and called to her children to come and stand by her. "Come, children," said she; "stand where all can see you and claim kinship with your noble uncle Reynard the Fox. We will all together pray the King that he will do us justice. Come, all my people that are of Reynard's kin; stand forth and claim his rights!"

Then came forward a number of beasts and stood beside Dame Rukenaw to plead in Reynard's cause — the Squirrel, the Musk Rat, the Ferret, the Marten with his wife Ordegale, the Civet-Cat, the Otter, and others who loved poultry fully as well as Reynard their cousin. With them were some who had been the Fox's enemies, but who dared not say so, for they feared Dame Rukenaw, as did all beasts, for her learning and shrewdness. Among

these were the Otter and his wife Pantecrote, and the Beaver. Besides these, twenty others came, for fear of Dame Rukenaw, to stand beside Reynard; and after them forty more, including Dame Atrote, with her sisters the Weasel and the Ermine, the Ass, the Badger, and the Water-Rat. They made a goodly company, and their hearts being hidden, it seemed that they all loved Reynard, and wished him well.

"My Lord King," then said Rukenaw, the She-Ape, "look here and see how many friends Reynard has who are ready to stand by him. Among us you may see many trusty servants who would not scruple to give our lives in your service if need should arise. Powerful, wise, and great though you are, the friendship of your people means more than a little to you. All we ask of your Majesty is that Reynard may have time to speak concerning these accusations which are brought against him. If he cannot prove his innocence, then let him suffer the penalty. Your Majesty will refuse a fair trial to none of your subjects. Let Reynard speak."

"Dame," said the Queen, "your words are the very ones I used in speaking to the King yesterday, but it was of no avail; his anger was so great that he would not hear me."

Then the Leopard spoke in his turn. "Sire," said he, "hear both sides of this question before you give judgment upon it. To punish by violence is not after the manner of great Kings. Hear Reynard as well as his accusers, and then, whatever way the verdict goes, all will be done in order and honourably."

"Sir Firapel, you speak wisely. I have been hot and hasty in my anger. When I saw my loyal Kyward's head, I could not keep cool and temperate. I will hear Reynard the Fox speak in his own defence. If he proves

that all these charges are false, I will gladly let him go free, for his own sake and for that of these good folk, his kin and friends, who plead for him."

A great load of sorrow and fear was lifted from Reynard's heart by these kindly words.

"Aha!" thought he, "my aunt has served me well. Now I have my tongue again, I shall use it to good purpose. There are no lies too great for me now. I will make the best story that ever was heard, and it shall bring me safely out of this dangerous adventure. I must be wary, too, for every word I utter will be noted. But I shall win, I fear not!" And at these joyous thoughts the Fox could have leaped in the air, but he remembered his position in time, and pulled a grave face.

"Alas! my lord, what say you?" cried he in a voice of alarm. "Are Bellin the Ram and Kyward the Hare both dead? What can this mean? What did Bellin bring to your Majesty? I gave him three jewels, one for your Majesty and two for the Queen, and bade him deliver them only into your hands. I would fain know where they are."

"Bellin brought us, as I have told you, the head of Kyward in your wallet," answered the King. "I was sorely angered against him, for he told me openly that he had caused the message to be sent to me himself. I had him slain for the foul deed, and he is dead."

"Alas! alas! Is this indeed true?" cried Reynard dolefully. "Why was I ever born, to bring sorrow to those I love most? Alack! my jewels! How shall I tell my poor wife that our treasures are lost? She will break her heart when she hears it; she will lose her wits for grief; she will never forgive me again! And my own heart will break too!"

"Dearest nephew," cried Dame Rukenaw, "cease weeping and tell us what these jewels were. What avails these tears now? What were these treasures? We must find some way to recover them. If they are in the world, Master Akeryn the Magician shall find them for us. He shall read in his wise books and use his strongest spells until we have them again."

"Ah, dear aunt, your words are kind, and they comfort me not a little," replied the Fox. "But it will be a harder business than you think to get those jewels back if they are stolen. There are none in the world so valuable: there never was a King who owned such treasures. Alack! see how we may trust our fellows and be deceived! But whoever has them shall give them up if I spend my life in seeking them."

Then with great lamentation the Fox went on to speak of the value of the lost jewels, to praise their size and lustre, and to bewail their loss.

"There were none like them!" he wept. "Listen, my friends and kinsmen; hear what I have lost, and pity me. One was a ring of fine gold, and within the circle were written magic words in Hebrew. I could not read them myself, for I know no Hebrew, but the wise man of Trèves, who is named Abrion, read them for me, and told me that there were no such wise words in all the world. Whoever wears that ring shall never suffer harm in all his life. Though he lie naked in the snow or the rain or frosts, he shall not take cold. No lightning nor thunder shall touch him, nor any witchcraft come nigh him; nor shall he ever be tempted to do wrong. It is a magic ring, and the words on it are magic words. There was a stone on it of three colours. One part of it shone like a crystal of red fire. So light and glowing it was that

a man might journey in a black night and see his way as clearly as if it were day. Another part was white and as clear as if it had been burnished. Whoever had any soreness in any part of his body, or any swellings or headache, or smarting, he had only to touch the place with this white stone and be healed. Or if anyone suffering from any illness or wasting disease, or from poison or strangulation, should dip this stone into a drop of water and then drink it, he would at once be cured. The third part was green like glass, and sprinkled within with purple veins. Whoever carried it with him would never be hurt by any enemy; the strongest and fiercest could not harm him; whenever he fought, by night or by day, so long as he fasted from food, he should always win. Wherever he went he should be beloved and honoured. His enemy who hated him, beholding the magic ring, should find his anger charmed away. Even if he went out naked to meet a hundred foemen, he should win them to respect and love him. But he must be a true-hearted gentleman, or the charm would not work for him. So I chose to send it to the King, for I thought no one else worthy to wear so precious a jewel. I knew him to be the noblest creature alive, and worthy to wear it. And through him all his subjects should have good fortune, and be preserved from sorrow and suffering, and battle, and danger by land and sea. I found this precious ring among my father's treasure, of which I have told you. With it I found a mirror and a comb, which my wife always carried with her. So beauteous were they that anyone beholding them could scarcely believe his eyes. The Queen has ever been gracious and good to me, and I sent these two to her as gifts. I cannot describe the beauties of the comb with enough praise.

It was made of the bone of a wondrous Panther who lived between the Indies and the Earthly Paradise. He was of every fair colour in the rainbow : there are no colours which did not shine and show in him. And he smelled so sweet that all the Beasts followed after him, to be cured by his sweet scent of all their sickness. His perfume was as that of all the gardens of the world : there is no scent that was not mingled in it. This Panther had a broad thin bone in his body, and when he was slain all the virtue of him went into this bone, which is nobly coloured and perfumed beyond all description. It cannot be broken, nor discoloured, nor bent, by fire, or water, or anything in the world. The sweet smell of it cures all disease : he who smells it carries a sound body and a merry heart all his days. It is as strong as a rock, yet as light as a feather. This comb is polished like fine silver, and the teeth of it are fine and small. And between the larger and the smaller teeth is a space enamelled and set with precious stones and silver and gold. The story of Venus, Juno, and Pallas, who strove for the golden apple of discord, is there wrought in jewels and fine metals, most curious and beautiful to behold. Now I will tell you of the mirror. Such virtue it has that one can see in it for the distance of a mile all that is happening among men and beasts. And whoever looks in it is healed straightway of any weakness or pain or smarting in his eyes. Can anyone wonder that I am distressed to lose such a glass ? The tree of which its frame is made stood in a fair forest, and was the finest tree of all that grew there. King Solomon made his temple roof of such wood. It is so hardy that it can never rot nor warp ; no worms or creatures that crawl and destroy other trees can harm it. It is called satin-wood, because it is fine and soft to the

touch, though it is so strong. Men prize it more highly than red gold. It is like the tree called ebony, that furnished the wood for the great Horse King Crompart caused to be made for love of the daughter of King Moreadigas. That Horse was so fashioned that whoever rode upon it could go at what pace he would. He might travel a hundred miles an hour upon it. Without the glass, the frame of the mirror was half a foot broad. Upon it strange histories were shown in colours. Gold and silver, red, azure, yellow, and black, were the colours thereon, and beneath the pictures was writing in fine enamels, so that all might read and understand them. There never was in the world so pleasant and costly and splendid a mirror. The first picture was of a Horse fat and fair to look on. And this Horse was angered because of a swift Hart whom he had chased all day and could not catch. So he spoke to a Herdsman, and said to him : ' If thou canst catch the Hart for me, thou shalt have his horns, his skin, and his flesh to sell, and these will fetch a great price.' The Herdsman said : ' How shall I catch him ?' ' Get upon my back,' said the Horse, ' and we will ride and ride until we find him.' So they rode and rode, but the Hart was so light of foot they came not up with him. At last the Horse grew weary, and said to the Herdsman who sat upon him : ' Get down from my back ; I am weary and would fain rest.' Then the Herdsman said : ' Softly, my friend. Here I am, and here I stay. I am thy master now. I have thee safe in bridle and rein ; thou canst not escape me. If thou triest to dislodge me I will spur thee. Thou art my Horse, and must do my will now, all thy life long.' So the Horse was caught in his own net, and paid in his own coin, as the saying has it. This story should be a lesson to

all who try to overtake and injure others. Let them beware lest they fall into the very traps they set for their prey.

"Another history was of an Ass and a Hound. These two lived with a rich man, and were well cared for and happy. The Hound played often, as Hounds do, with his master, leaping upon him and licking his face, and waving his tail. Baldwin the Ass looked on at these gambols, and said to himself: 'Here is this wretched Hound, who is no good to anyone in the world, getting praise and favour, when he leaps and fawns upon our master, while I, who do the work of fifteen men, am unnoticed. I fare on thistles and lie upon the ground, and that fat Hound lies by his master and eats meat and bones and all he desires. I must see what I can do to win notice and praise.' So when next his master came near the Ass arose and sprang upon him, and puffed out his mouth and licked his face, and brayed and kicked, and made merry after the manner of Hounds. But his master thought the Ass was mad, and cried aloud for help. And all the servants came running, and beat and belaboured Baldwin the Ass, so that he was nearly killed among them, and was thankful to return to his old life and be an Ass as before.

"This is a lesson for all who envy another's place and state, and seek to drive out others from favour and to usurp their place. The Ass is born to labour and to eat thistles, and if he is raised above his natural position in society he becomes useless and foolish, and shocks everyone by his rough and senseless manners.

"Some such I know, who are risen up and become great, who should be in humility and servants' offices. These tales remind me of the false trick that was played once

upon my father by Tybert the Cat. They had sworn friendship together, and set out upon their travels in company, agreeing to divide all their gains and to share everything. Presently they saw hunters with their Hounds coming over the field towards them. Up they sprang, and away they went as fast as their legs would travel. But the Hounds espied them, and presently gained upon them, and my father and Tybert were afraid, and asked each other what they should do to escape. My father tried to cheer Tybert, and said to him: 'Fear not, good Cat; I have a sackful of wiles and tricks for use upon such occasions as this.' But Tybert cared not for my father's safety, so long as he escaped himself; he ran up a tree out of harm's way, and left my father to meet the Hounds alone and without help. And when they came near he gibed at my father, and shouted out to him: 'How now, Reynard? Undo your sack of wiles; they will save you!' What were my father's feelings at hearing his trusted companion scorn and mock at his danger? The Hounds came upon him as he was half dazed by the shock and would have killed him, but by a mighty effort he escaped from them into an old hole he knew of, and so outwitted them. This story shows how often one puts trust in another only to be deceived. Alas! how many folk nowadays will promise all and perform nothing! Is it any wonder if I hate Tybert for this piece of unfaithfulness? But I do not hate him; I know my duty to my neighbour too well. I neither hate nor envy him, but this much I will say—it would not overmuch grieve me to see him in such trouble as he brought upon my poor father. Still, I forgive him with my heart, though sometimes that evil nature which we all share tempts me to feel anger towards him.

"But I must speak of the mirror. Another history showed and told of the Wolf who went upon the heath, and there found a dead Horse lying on the ground, whose flesh was all eaten by others. Nevertheless, for greed, the Wolf fell upon the bones, and ate and swallowed them, until one stuck right across his throat, and caused him such pain that he went in terror for his life. He sought everywhere for wise doctors and magicians to heal him, and promised them great gifts if they would cure him of his pain. At last, after he had sought far and wide and got no ease, he met with the Crane, who has a long neck and bill, and prayed help from him, promising great rewards and undying friendship in return. The Crane took him at his word, and putting his head into the Wolf's mouth, he drew out the bone in his bill. The Wolf cried out with the pain, and when it was out he said to the Crane: 'You have hurt me sorely, but I forgive you, though I would not forgive another who did so to me. But do it not again.' Then said the Crane: 'Now you are cured, Sir Isegrim. Go and enjoy yourself; but first give me the reward you promised me.' 'Reward?' cried the Wolf. 'What next, I wonder? You tear and scratch my throat until I am wild with pain, and then ask for a reward! You put your head into my mouth in your insolence, and when I suffer you to draw it out unharmed you ask gifts of me! I think I deserve more reward than you do, and where shall I get it?' This story is a warning to all who put their trust in false schemers. Innocent folk are deceived oftentimes by promises of reward that are never fulfilled. How many poor fellows have been served as the Crane was! When crafty and wicked men arise to high positions, they will enslave the poor and refuse any reward for their labours,

They will make promises and break them, swear friendship and betray their companions.

"Well, I have told you many of the stories on the mirror, but there are many more that I have no time to tell. The maker of it was a learned and cunning craftsman, and its value was beyond price. All these treasures were unspeakably precious, and I thought that my dear and honoured King and the Lady Queen would have accepted and kept them in token of my loyalty and service.

"My children sorrowed greatly after the mirror when I sent it away by Bellin the Ram. They loved looking in it and admiring themselves in it, and reading and telling the histories to each other. Alas! how little I thought that Kyward was so near his death when I hung the wallet upon his shoulder and bade him and Bellin farewell! They were two of my best friends. I know not to whom else I could have trusted such jewels. Shame upon the wicked murderer, whoever he is! Let him tremble now, for murder cannot be hidden long. I shall find him out, I swear! Perhaps he is among this very company, for often evil men go about among the good and innocent, and are not discovered for a time. They are so crafty they can cover up their wickedness so that it is not easily seen.

"But this is my greatest grief, and the thing that gives me most surprise—that our Lord the King should say that I and my father have not served him well! I cannot understand it. Perhaps he is so overwrought with hearing this thing and that thing, and settling many matters of business, that he confuses one thing with another, and so I get blame instead of praise. Dear lord, do you not remember when you were a young boy

of two years, in my father's lifetime, when your father, the late King, lay very sick? My father came to Court from Montpelier, where he had studied medicine for five years, and learned all there is to know of healing sciences. And he examined the King your father, and told him that the only thing to save him was that he should devour the liver of a Wolf of seven years old.

"The Wolf stood by and heard, but said nothing. Then your father said: 'Sir Isegrim, I must have your liver to eat if I am ever to rise up from this bed of sickness.' But Isegrim made excuse, and said he was only five years old, and would have gone away and left the King to die, but my father would not let him go, but held him, and cut out his liver, and found it was seven years old, and good medicine for the King. Your father ate it, and was cured at once, my lord, and he gave my father great rewards, and commanded his household to call him Master Reynard, and to treat him with due respect and honour. My father became the King's greatest friend and counsellor, and was never away from his side. The King caused him to wear a garland of roses upon his head in token of his favour, and he was never seen without it. But now everything is changed: his old services, his loyalty and faithfulness are all forgotten; his memory is despised, and low and covetous folk have risen up in his place, and are covered with honours. It is an ill thing when such folk rise to rule over the poor and helpless: those who are low and mean of birth and nature can never be fit lords and masters. They oppress the poor; they listen to no tales but those that bring them gain; they show no mercy; they are covetous, and desire only their own advancement. Alas! how many such persons are there in kings' courts to-day! They

fawn, and flatter, and please their prince; but when they are needed to serve him by hard labour or in warfare, then they fail. They are like the Wolf, who would have kept his liver for himself at the cost of the King's life! I cannot bear such folk: their ways are hateful to me. The lives of my King and Queen are dearer to me than my own. Ah, my lord, I think you have forgotten these things that happened in your youth, when my father saved the King's life. And I myself have all my days done you reverence and worship and courtesy. Maybe you have forgotten this, too, that I have no thanks now from you? But I do not speak in bitterness, dear lord. You are worthy of all that anyone can do to serve you. Your nobility you inherit from your great ancestors, and I acknowledge your sovereignty, and only seek to serve and worship your Majesty. Perhaps this matter that I shall now relate has slipped your memory. One day when I was walking with Isegrim we met a great Swine that made a hideous and grievous noise and shrieking. For the sake of peace we slew him, and when we laid him low, your Majesty and my Lady the Queen came upon us from a grove near by. You saluted us friendly, and said that you were hungry and weary, and the Queen also, and asked us in all courtesy for a piece of our meat. Isegrim muttered and grumbled so low that you could not hear, but I spoke up loudly, and begged your Majesties to help yourselves. Then the Wolf took the Swine and parted it, and took half for himself and gave you and the Queen a quarter between you, and the other quarter he bit at and chewed, and left me only a scrap, and departed with the greater part. Thus he showed his vile nature. And when he had filled himself he returned, and your Majesty was angry, and

smote him on the head for his discourtesy, and he ran away howling. You bade us bring more food, and said to the Wolf: 'Beware how you part the next meat you bring us.' So we went and brought a fine fat calf, and you were so pleased at the sight, you laughed and praised me for a swift hunter. You bade me divide it, and I gave you half and the Queen half, and I gave Isegrim the head, and took the feet for myself. Then you said to me: 'Reynard, who taught you your good and courteous manners?' And I laughed and said: 'This fellow here, my lord, who divided the swine so neatly.' Alas! there are too many such Wolves in the land. They spare neither friend nor enemy; they destroy and eat all before them. They are consumed with greed and selfishness, and take everything for themselves. Woe to those towns and to that land where Wolves are in power!

"My lord, this is only one of the services I have been able to do for your Majesty. Others I could tell, but I fear to weary you. Oh, my Lord King, I remember well the day when nothing was done here without my advice. If your Majesty's memory were as good, I think I should not stand in such need to-day. But I ask only for justice. Let those who complain of me bring witnesses, and prove their words. If I am guilty, let me suffer. But let no one bring complaints without witnesses to prove them true."

"Reynard," answered the King, "you ask only what is just and fair. All I know of Kyward's death is that Bellin the Ram brought his head to me in your wallet. I have no proof against you, nor any witnesses. Therefore I must acquit you of that murder and set you free."

"May Heaven reward your Majesty!" cried the Fox,

in an ecstasy of delight. "You shall never regret this good and wise deed. My heart is heavy with grief on Kyward's account. I loved him well, and am more shocked than I can say to hear of his death. When they left me at Malepardus, I felt a sudden fear and grief, and thought I should have swooned; now I know it was a warning that great sorrow was in store for me by them."

All but a few of those who stood by had been persuaded that Reynard's tale of the jewels was true by his craft and subtlety in looking innocent and sorrowful. They were so much moved and touched by his grief and pale looks that they were now ready to rejoice in his freedom and forgiveness. The King and Queen, too, were persuaded that he had really sent them the jewels, and they pitied him, and looked kindly upon him, bidding him be of good cheer and set to work to find them again. For Reynard, by his description of these wonderful treasures, had made them very desirous to own the ring, the comb, and the mirror. Though they had not received the gifts, they thanked the Fox as warmly as if they had done so, and bade him discover them, if possible, when they would accept them with joy.

"Aha!" thought Reynard, whose own greed and slyness made him ready to suspect these things in others. "So I am to go free for the sake of the jewels, am I?" Aloud he said gravely: "I can never thank your Majesties enough for this tenderness and pity you have shown me in my sore distress. How can I mourn longer, who have the friendship of a King and Queen so noble and so kind? For my part, I will not rest day or night; I will travel to the four corners of the world; I will seek, and pray, and threaten, until the thieves give me my jewels

again. And I beg of you, my lord the King, that if they are in such strong hands that I may not win them alone; your Majesty will lend me your help, and the help of the law, for it is to your Majesty's honour that justice should be done."

"My help shall be ready for you, Reynard, when need be," replied the King.

"Oh, my lord, you are wondrously gracious to me!" cried Reynard then, and with excellent reason, for had he not bound the King by promise before witnesses to uphold him in his adventurings?

He might go where he chose, and commit any violence he would, in the search for the hidden jewels, in the King's name and with his support. Is it any wonder that the Fox rejoiced? He was now delivered from danger of death into a greater freedom than he had ever known before.

XI

THE TRIUMPH OF REYNARD

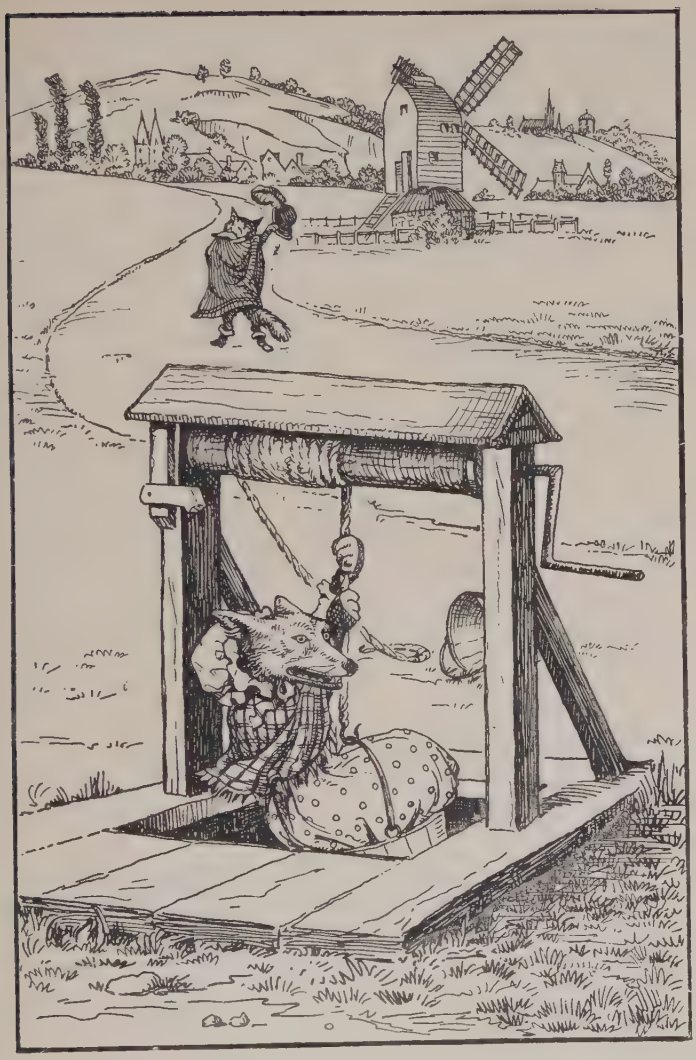
ISEGRIM, the grey Wolf, listened ill-pleased to these fair words and promises, for he could well see whither they led.

"My lord!" he cried, "surely your Majesty has more wit than to be again deceived by this false, scheming traitor? Listen to what I will tell you of, and judge if he is not a deceiver. On a winter's day he was with my wife by the waterside, and told her he would teach her to catch fish with her tail.

He bade her hang it in the water until the fish took hold of it, and then to draw them out. My wife did as he bade her, being a trustful woman, and in the deep water she let down her tail, and held it there until it was fast frozen in the ice, and she could not pluck it out again. Then she cried for help to the Fox, and he mocked her, and even beat her, until I came by and caught him in the very act. My poor wife cried so loud in her pain and distress that all the people of the village came out with flails and pitchforks and big staves, and I only just got her free and away with me to safety before they reached us. My lord, is not this a foul deed, and ought not Reynard to suffer for it ?"

"If this were true indeed, my lord," returned Reynard, "I should deserve punishment; but it is every word false, and the invention of a jealous and cruel enemy. It is true I spoke of fishing to my aunt, and told her how many there were to be caught in the lake, and so soon as she heard me speak of them, her greed caused her to rush off before me upon the ice, and there she froze and stuck. When I saw her in such a plight I went to help her, and was pulling and tugging to set her free when Isegrim came up and accused me of all these things. They ran indeed, but it was to warm their frozen feet. I brought them into no danger, nor ever have done so. Ask his wife if he is not himself a deceiver and a bad husband to her."

"Ah, Reynard," cried Dame Ursula, the Wolf's wife, "you reason so well that you would persuade all that your lies are true. But I remember bad things of you. Do you recollect how you sat in the bucket of a well that was beneath in the water and called to me to help you, for you had eaten a great fish, and were like to die ?



"'*You ran off laughing, and left me in the bucket.*'"

You bade me step into the other bucket and come to you, and when I got in I went down and your bucket came up, for they hung on a rope in such wise that one was up when the other was down. You ran off laughing, and left me in the bucket all day, to suffer in the cold, and I had a great beating from the village folk ere I could escape at night."

"Well, auntie," said Reynard, "take care another time that you are not so deceived! I called on you in distress, and knew not half what I said, and if you lost your head and went down in the bucket, who is to blame but yourself?"

"My lord," cried Isegrim once more, "hear me again! Bid the Fox tell how he lost me my ear in the woods. Reynard, I dare you to tell the tale to the King!"

"Pooh!" said the Fox. "That tale is not to your credit, I think. But I will tell it nevertheless. Your Majesty, I was with the Wolf in the forest, and he was complaining of hunger very noisily, as was his way, whether he was empty or full. Look at him now—how his jaws work! He would kill and eat at this moment if he dared. Well, we came to a great hole, and I said: 'Go in, uncle; there is surely something in there.' But he was afraid, and made me go in before him, though I am small and weak, and he is great and strong above all his kind. Inside lay an ugly old She-Ape with three frightful children, and they all lay gaping at me with their great mouths full of teeth. They were so ugly and so dirty that I felt ill at beholding them; but I greeted them courteously, and praised the hideous cubs till the mother was so pleased that she bade me stay to dinner, and, for fear of her (for she was larger than I, and very fierce), I stayed and ate, and took away with me a great

piece as a gift from the She-Ape to my wife. When I came out, Isegrim asked me what I had been doing, and, in spite of my warnings, he would go in himself. When he saw the three foul children he abused them to their mother, and told her he had never seen such frights, and angered her so that she sent him forth with a sound drubbing."

"You false liar!" cried Isegrim, in great anger. "Words are no good with you. Here I cast my glove down and challenge you to combat! Take it up, and we shall see who is the better warrior!"

"Alack!" thought the Fox. "Here is a business! He is too strong for me. However, I must not appear afraid. Perhaps I may win, after all, for my feet are strong and my claws sharp, and he has never been the same since his boots were torn off. Isegrim," said he aloud, "I am little and not strong, but I accept your challenge, and if the right prospers, I shall prove you a liar by giving you a thorough beating."

Thus the combat was arranged, and the King decreed that it should take place on the following morning. The Wolf chose as his seconds the Bear and the Cat, and Reynard, for his, Bitelet and Grimbart the Badger.

Then they parted for a while, and the She-Ape counselled Reynard how he should win in the fight.

"Keep cool, nephew," said she. "All will be well if you keep your judgment calm. Now listen to me. You must have all the hair shorn from your head and tail, that Isegrim cannot hold you by them. And when you come into the lists, turn suddenly and flick him in the eyes with the point of your tail to make them water. Then, when he comes after you, scrabble and throw up dust in his sore eyes, so that he is blinded. So you can

lead him a fine dance until you get behind him and fling him down."

Then the She-Ape shaved the Fox's head and tail, and dressed his body with oil, so that he was as slippery as an eel; and she said magic words over him, which she had learned from a wise man. The Fox thanked her, and felt well pleased. He laid himself down beneath a tree, and slept till the sun rose again. The Otter wakened him early, and brought him a young duck for his breakfast, and when he had eaten and drunk he went forth to the lists.

When the King and all the Court saw him shorn and oiled, they were amazed at his ugly appearance. But Reynard cared not, for he felt sure the victory was his already.

Dame Rukenaw, the She-Ape, stood by Reynard and blessed him, and gave him good advice, while the field was made ready. When everything was in order the master of the lists called upon the Wolf and the Fox to come forth. Forth they came, before all the Court, and the great battle began.

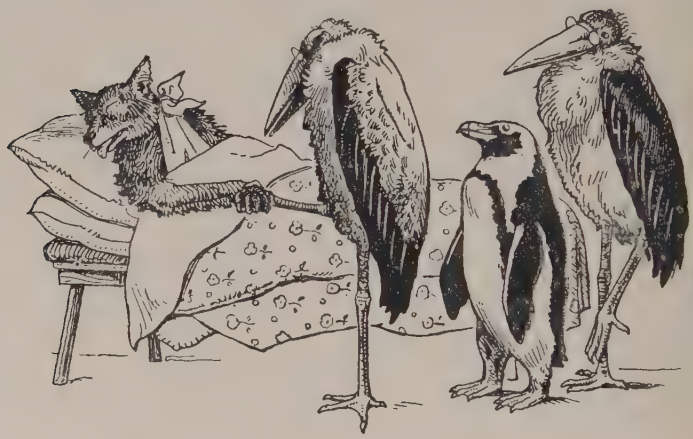
It was not long before all saw that the victory would be with the Fox. All that the She-Ape had bidden him to do he did, and the Wolf was soon nearly blinded with tears and sand. It was a long fight, for the Wolf was very strong; but Reynard had the advantage of good sight and a body so oiled and slippery that Isegrim could not hold him down or catch his hair in his teeth. At last it was over, and the Beasts cried out that Reynard was the winner.

"Friends," said the Fox, "so be it. I have fought for the right, and the right has conquered. Those who are of my party, come to me, and we will take counsel together."

A multitude of Beasts came flocking to the Fox's

side, for besides those who were his friends, there came many who were ready to side with the winner on all occasions. The Beaver came, and the Otter, with their wives, Pantecrote and Ordegale; the Martens, the Ferrets, the Mice, the Squirrels, and others too many to tell of.

A great feast followed, to celebrate the victory, and Reynard was praised on all sides. Music was played in his honour, and all was merry and pleasant. But poor Isegrim was not at the feast, for after the combat he had



"The wise doctors came and tended Isegrim."

been carried home, sorely wounded and weary; and he lay in bed, and the wise doctors, the Storks and the Penguins, came and tended him.

At the end of the feast Reynard stood up to make a speech.

"My lord and dear King," said he, "all things have come to a happy ending at last. When I came here but a little while ago, I found enemies and false friends had been poisoning your Majesty's ear against me, though

Heaven knows I had neither done nor wished any harm to them. But Envy and Jealousy are fierce foes. They are like some greedy Hounds I once saw quarrelling together over their food. There is no decency nor courtesy among them. Now they are silenced. The right has conquered, and all good folk rejoice! I thank Heaven that I am honest and true, and fear no accusations that any man can bring against me. My Lord King, I will be, as I have been ever, your faithful and loving subject all my life long!"

"I accept your homage, Reynard. See well to it that you order your life so honestly in the future that none shall bring any ill tales and accusations against you," said the King. "Here and now I reinstate you in my trust and favour, and appoint you to be my bailiff and overlord over all my lands."

Reynard and all his kin thanked the King gratefully and with fair words. "Heaven bless and reward your Majesties!" he said. "I must now begone to comfort my poor wife, whom I left in sorrow and fear. But I will return to take up my duties ere long."

"Farewell, Reynard. Be not long away," replied the King.

Then the Court broke up, and all the Beasts, great and small, departed to their own homes. Some went by the highways of the trees, and some by the forest paths; some crept by the moss-ways, and some flew above in the wide air. In a little time there were none left but those who were servants of the King's palace in the high woods.

And far away at his castle of Malepardus there was a merry welcome for Reynard the Fox.

Adapted from Caxton by E. L. Darton.

SPOTTY AND GOSLING

I

IN the middle of a pretty little blue lake there was an island, a bright green island, with a willow-tree growing at the edge of it, hanging over into the water. Under the willow were some green ferns. But what is that among the ferns? A nest of some kind, and a very large one—too big for a lark or thrush. It is evidently the work of some kind of waterfowl. Yes, sitting right in the nest is a pretty little moorhen, and in the water close by her side is the cock, looking proud and spruce. He has just been cleaning his feathers and polishing his black coat till it glistens again in the sunshine.

"I wonder how much longer those little chicks of ours will take hatching? You've been sitting here a precious long time. I don't like leaving you, my dear, yet I very much want to take a long journey to the farthest shore, to see a friend of mine whom I haven't visited for months."

"Well, my dear," answered Mrs. Moorhen, "you

would not have me break the shells, would you? I'm sure if I can be patient, you may be. Besides, we need not wait much longer, for one of the shells really did break this morning, and the little chick came out. A pert little fellow he is, too; but his feathers are rather scanty, and I must keep him warm. Bless you, all the shells will be broken by this evening; if not, I'll give them a peck."

"I'm very glad to hear it," answered Mr. Moorhen. "Meantime, I'll just take a flying swim round the island, and see how it's all looking, ready for the little ones to take a swim as soon as they are out of the shell. I'm rather afraid of those water-rats. They've been prowling about a good deal lately."

Off started the little cock, and stayed out much later than he had intended, for round the other side of the island he came upon a little mossy cave which he thought would delight his young chicks as soon as they could come and see it; but, thinking it would be improved by a little more scooping with his bill and then a little fresh moss, he set to work. In grubbing the earth he came upon some very fine worms and slugs, of which he made a choice heap to carry home to his patient wife. It was rather slippery work to hold many in his bill, so he could not swim home in his usual swift style, and, to his surprise, the sun was setting just as he rounded the last corner and came in sight of his snug home among the ferns. His wife greeted him with:

"Such good news for you, my dear! All the little ones are hatched. The last one is rather a sickly, puny little fellow, with one leg broken, I think, and he seems as if he could hardly hold up his head. You have brought a good mouthful of food, I see, which is most welcome.

Just hark how the little ones are calling out! And I am starving."

"Here's some for you, my dear, and I'll divide one into pieces for the chicks."

He laid his worms on a stone, and soon minced them up. Mrs. Moorhen now jumped off her nest most willingly, and they both popped bits into the wide-open mouths.

"This is the sickly one," said Mrs. Moorhen. "Come, he looks a little bit better now, though, as if he would not mind a bit of worm as well as the best of them. He is very handsomely marked, my dear; see these specks down his back. We really must name him Spotty. It's a great pity his leg is broken. I must have given his shell rather too hard a peck."

"I shouldn't wonder, my dear," replied Mr. Moorhen. "You know you are sometimes rather impatient. These other three all seem strong and healthy enough. Here's a little chap the exact image of me—a jet-black coat, with a good polish. If he only takes after me in the speedy way he moves about I'll call him Fleetwing. I cannot say much for the looks of the other two—a little like you, my dear, only not half so handsome as you used to be. They may improve. We'll call one Dowdy, and this other miserable little object Ruffle, as she seems to be unusually untidy about the feathers even for a fledgeling. Pretty sharp appetites they all have, though! I think I'll just pop round the corner again for a second supply of worms. I've found a spot, my dear, where they really are too plentiful. I could never carry all I find."

"Well, father, don't stay long, for when they are all clamouring in this greedy way with their mouths open, and I with nothing to give them, it wellnigh drives me crazy."

Mr. Moorhen did not hear the end of this speech, for it certainly was not a mere boast when he remarked on the speed of his swimming powers. He was a smart, active little fellow, though it cannot be denied either that he could boast a little occasionally. His wife listened to his singing as he shot along :

"A light heart,
A quick wing,
And a bright shining coat had he !"

When he brought home the supper for his hungry family, which they speedily consumed, they all settled down for a good long night's sleep, so as to be quite ready for the morning, when there would be grand doings in the Moorhen family. The father often during the night popped up his head and took a survey of the sky, trying to make out what kind of a day the morrow would be. He had no objection to its raining for himself—in fact, he was rather partial to it than otherwise ; but he thought of his young ones, with their scant supply of feathers, especially that ugly little Miss Ruffle, whose coat was a very poor affair at present to keep out rain, wind, or cold of any sort.

There was no fear as to the weather, however. It proved a lovely morning—a bright, warm sun, with enough breeze to chase about the white clouds overhead, and to make little sparkling ripples on the blue lake beneath : the very morning to suit chickens just out of their shells, ready to take their first swim with their father and mother ! No staying in the nest late that morning ! The sun had only time enough to warm the air a little when Mr. Moorhen, having given his young ones a hasty breakfast of worms, duck-weed, and water-

flies, announced that they must all make ready to be popped out of the nest into the water—and no hesitation about it, either!

"But, my dear," said the mother, "little Spotty cannot go. He never could swim, and I don't think he would be any credit to us. I wouldn't have the neighbours say I had hatched such a miserable little fellow for anything! He could not even limp along on shore. No; we had much better leave him here; he'll do well enough. One good thing is, he is of a cheerful disposition, for he has done nothing all the morning but make chirping noises to himself."

"Inherited my voice, I should not wonder," said Mr. Moorhen. "Well, let him stay at home for to-day. How you do dawdle, my dear! If you had but half my activity! The eldest must start first. Now, Master Fleetwing, prove you deserve your name. Jump on the side of the nest and into the water."

Splash! In went the young Moor-chick, and being a spirited little fellow, he was not at all frightened by the plunge, but laughed outright to feel himself supported on the top of those dancing blue waves, which he had been peeping at all the morning from under his mother's wing. Out he paddled his feet, first one side and then the other, and was astonished to find he could guide himself any way he liked. As he looked up he saw his sisters Dowdy and Ruffle (for the father insisted on those being their names) springing off the nest together, two merry little chicks only too delighted to join Fleetwing in the water.

"But may not Spotty come too?" asked Ruffle.

"No, no, not to-day," said Mrs. Moorhen—"another day. Spotty must get to swim briskly, and then we'll

take him. Spotty will do very well at home, and here's a fat worm which father has just brought him."

The worm was popped into Spotty's mouth, and off started all the rest of the party. They turned the corner, and were out of sight in no time.

II

Little Spotty, left behind, began to think what he could do with himself. First he sang a little in his own merry way, then he plumed his speckled feathers, smoothing down the rough ones, and tried to count how many spots he had on him. He next leaned over the edge of the nest, and looked at himself in the clear water till he quite longed to be in it.

"I really think I could swim as well as any of them," he said, "only I feel afraid to start all by myself. Who is this great fellow coming round the corner? Oh, I feel frightened! He's big enough to eat me at a gobble if he chose! I'll hide!"

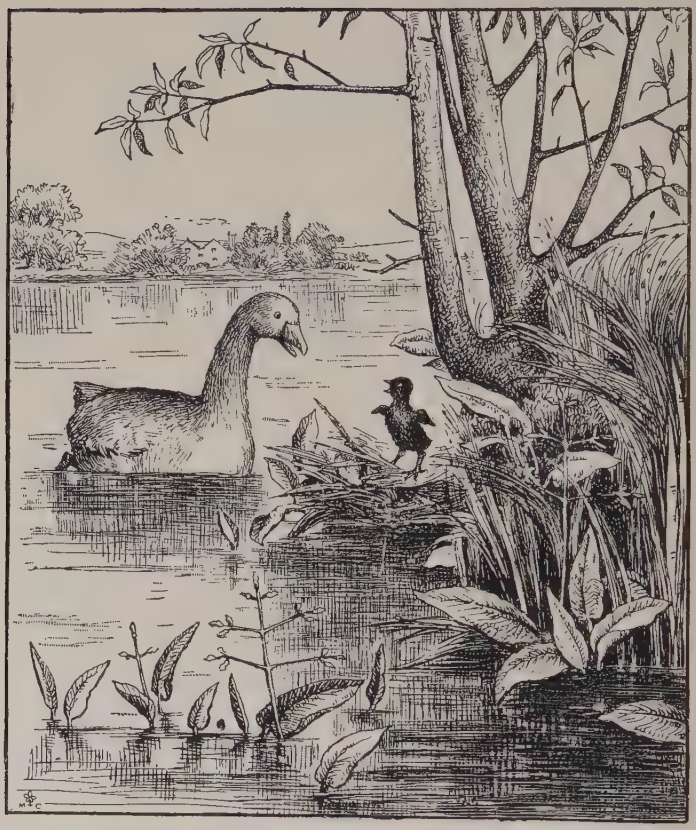
And down Spotty popped, snuggling in among the soft lining at the bottom of the nest till he was hardly visible.

He remained there some time, till he began to feel very curious, wondering whether the creature had gone by or whether he was still outside. Just one peep he must take! Up he jumped, and there, staring him straight in the face, were two eyes and a great red bill and such a long neck! Suddenly the neck grew longer, the bill opened, and there began an ugly hissing noise, making Spotty nearly jump out of the nest with fright.

"Don't spring so high as that next time, youngster, or you'll be down my throat if I don't take care," said the

grey bird. "Are you in the habit of making such leaps generally?"

"Oh no," said Spotty, "but you really did frighten



"'*Who are you?' said Spotty.*"

me so. You made such a very ugly noise. I never knew I could jump at all before. Who are you?"

"I'm nothing but a young Gosling taking a bath and

a swim this fine morning," said the stranger. "My family live east of the water, but I felt tired of seeing them all ducking their heads down and then up again and twirling round just like myself, so I thought I'd swim out to this island, which I had heard my father speak of. A voyage of discovery, you see, and I must say I've stumbled on as bright a little bird as ever was. How come you to be so precious small, and all by yourself here, too? I shouldn't much like it, and I'm five times your size, and more than that."

"Yes, you are very big, but I don't feel frightened of you now that I look at you again, if you don't make that hissing noise. I wish I could take a swim with you. I have a lame leg, so I didn't like to go off by myself; but if I might go along with you I shouldn't feel a bit afraid."

"The very thing! We'll start off on a voyage of discovery together, and tell our travels at the end. You may stay out all day, mayn't you?" asked Gosling.

"Oh yes," said Spotty. "I don't think my parents would mind much if I stayed away altogether. They started off without me this morning."

"Well, then, let us go. I want first of all to explore right round the island, to see what is on the other side, and then off to the North Pole, if we can get there. You don't feel afraid to come with me?"

"Oh no; I'd like to go anywhere with you, and not come back for ever such an age."

Little Spotty sprang up on the edge of the nest, spread his wings, and made a dash into the water. His lame leg did not seem to hinder him at all. He had plenty of courage, and, finding that he floated easily, he pushed himself about with his other leg or his wings, and shuffled along so fast that Mr. Gosling said he found it quite

difficult to keep up with him. Of course, it did not take them very long to get round the island. Fortunately, in their rambles they did not meet the rest of the Moor-fowl, who would not have liked to see Spotty out, not having taken him themselves.

They stopped a little time to rest in Mossy Cave, and had a feast of worms, which young Gosling showed Spotty how to grub up.

"Well," said Gosling, "as I want to get to the North Pole some time to-day, and I suppose it is some way off, as none of my family have ever been there yet, I think we had better start on again, especially as you may get tired, and must rest here and there when we reach any shore."

"Oh, I'm quite ready to be off," said Spotty. "I feel so fresh and have made such a meal that I think we can go straight to the North Pole, or anywhere. Only, what is the North Pole, Master Gosling? Is it a very tall pole, and are there many North Pole ducklings there?"

"Oh," said Gosling, "I've heard it is not a pole at all, and that's why I want to go and see what it really is, and why it is called a pole when there isn't one at all. I've heard it's a cold place, and that Eider Ducks live there, but I've never seen any yet. I only hope they are a friendly kind of birds, and will tell us all about it."

Just as they were leaving Mossy Cave their attention was caught by the sound of voices not very far from them, for now they could distinguish the words spoken. Spotty was sure he caught the name of Mr. Moorhen. The voices came from the left, so the speakers must be just behind that clump of grass. Spotty was so small and active that he managed to take one peep round the corner, and there, at the bottom of the clear water, he saw two large Water-Rats. Young Gosling stretched his long neck up,

and peered at them over the grassy mound, and he and Spotty agreed that they did not like the look of them at all.

"Let us hide," said Gosling, "and hear what they say, as it is something about your family. No good, I'm sure, could come from such evil-looking creatures. Just hark!"

"All the chicks were hatched last night," said the first Water-Rat. "I heard Mrs. Moorhen telling her husband. But the worst of it is, she is such a one for sitting on her nest. She never leaves it except to take the young ones out. So how can we get at them, I should like to know?"

"I think we could attack the nest in broad daylight," said the second Water-Rat, "even with the cock and hen there. A couple of small things as they are! But there is a still safer plan which I'll tell you. I know the way they have built their nest, the stupid things! It laps half over into the water. We could creep under, gnaw a hole, and pull the little ones through before the cock and hen know anything about it. We had better do it this very night. The younger the chickens the better eating, and I am especially partial to Moorhens. There's no time like the present in affairs of this kind."

"A capital plan!" exclaimed the first Rat. "And we'll meet here when the moon rises above the edge of the water to-night. I must be off now to look for some fish I caught sight of a minute ago."

Little Spotty began to tremble for fear these terrible creatures, with their partiality to Moorhens, should come round into the cave; but, looking up at his great friend, he felt wonderfully reassured. That large beak could give a hard snap even at a Water-Rat; and then Master Gosling could make a terrible noise come out of that beak, which he said he meant for laughing, but Spotty was certain

anyone who did not know this fact would be very much frightened by the noise.

However, for the present there was no need to think of defence of any kind, as the two Rats swam off into the deep water, leaving the cave far out of sight. Having seen them safely off, Spotty and Gosling emerged, but not to continue their voyage of discovery in the blue lake. They both felt a little frightened by this first adventure, and Spotty was anxious to get home and tell the news at the nest, where they never could remain that night.

They soon reached the other side of the island, but found the home still quite deserted. Spotty thought they would not come back till sundown, and Gosling agreeing with him, they began to consult what to do next.

"Come over to my house," said Gosling. "We'll try the North Pole another day. Now we had better set to work and make some kind of a nest near ours. Your poor parents will return so tired that they will never be able to build one for themselves, and won't it be fun for us to do it!"

"Oh yes," said Spotty; "and such a surprise, too!"

"All my brothers and sisters will help," continued Gosling, "so it won't take very long. We'll keep out the old Water-Rats somehow or other. I don't think they would venture near our people. We've never had an attack yet."

"Let's be off, Gosling!" exclaimed Spotty, "for we must be back here before sundown to tell them. Where is your home? very far off? Can you see it from here?"

"No, not exactly; but you can just see a very tall tree over there. It's near there. Oh, we'll soon reach it. Off we go!"

III

Thus the two started once more, Master Gosling sailing out majestically, little Spotty darting after him in a quick, short way which amused his friend greatly. First he would try to mount on top of the little sparkling ripples, till each ripple seemed to slip away under him, when up sprang another close by. If he caught sight of a very big one ahead, he would dart over to it, thinking it was so big that it would take a long time melting away ; but no, it was quite gone before he reached it.

"You mustn't keep dodging about like that," said Master Gosling, "for I never can tell where you are off to next, and besides, we shall take double the time on the journey. We are not very far off now, though. You can see the bank quite distinctly. You are such a quick little fellow, Spotty, that we had better try a race. See who will be over there first. One—two—three—and off !"

Not even then could Spotty persuade himself to swim along quite straight. He did so at the first start, but soon began to cut through the waves, a little to the left and then a little to the right, at such a rapid rate, however, that, feeling he was ahead of Gosling, he was just going to give one final spurt which would carry him right in to the shore, when, on looking up, he caught sight of a number of great creatures, very like his friend Gosling, but looking terribly big, and some of them making a loud hissing, which, though they might also mean it for laughing, was very alarming to listen to. Spotty turned round like a shot, and darted up against his friend, who was hissing too.

"Spotty, you'd have won the race if you hadn't turned

back in that ridiculous manner," said Gosling. "All your feathers are up the wrong way! Why, those are only my five brothers and sisters, and I dare say father and mother are near at hand."

"Oh, never mind; don't call them," begged Spotty. "They must be so very big. You are big, but I don't mind you at all."

"And you needn't mind the rest of my family, either," said Gosling. "They can all laugh as heartily as I do, and as they are strong and big they'll do all the better for helping to build our house. Here's a new friend of mine, brothers."

He spoke to the five Goslings, who were by this time crowding round the new-comer, examining Spotty most closely, for they had never seen one of his tribe before, and he appeared to them to be most unaccountably small!

Mr. Gander and Mrs. Goose came up to the party, and, as they were a kind, good-natured, hospitable couple, they were very glad to give Master Spotty a hearty welcome, which so reassured him that he felt much less frightened by the number of eyes staring so hard at him.

"I'm sure I must remember your father, my dear," said Mr. Gander. "He lives over at the island, and a comfortable little home they must have of it there. I haven't seen him all the summer, but we used to be great friends. How is it you are so far from your home? You don't look very old, either."

Spotty answered that this was his first day out, and then he and Gosling related their adventure in Mossy Cave, and what they had come to do this side of the water.

"A very good idea," said Mr. Gander. "You've a nice long afternoon before you, and all you fellows ought

to be able to get ready a first-class nest before sunset. It needn't be a very big one, as I don't expect Mr. Moorhen has grown much since I last saw him." Here Mr. Gander gave a loud laugh, in which his children joined in chorus, but Spotty was getting used to the sound by this time.

They all began work with a will. The Goslings were very pleased at having such near and lively neighbours.

We must leave them at their work, and see what the rest of the Moor-chicks were doing all this time.

IV

For some time after they left the nest they all kept well together, for the young ones were a little timid, as everything seemed so new to them, and they had plenty of questions to ask their parents. They seemed as if they could never tire of swimming about in that lovely clear water, darting after water-spiders and flies, and laughing merrily if they succeeded in catching anything, now and then ducking their heads under to take a peep at the pebbles below them. They were afraid to dip more than their heads in, for fear they should never come up again, till Mr. Moorhen suddenly darted down—head, body, and tail—and popped up so many yards off that they could hardly believe it was really their father they saw in the distance. He came back to them, and then showed Fleetwing how to do the same.

When he had once learnt the right way, Fleetwing was delighted to repeat the performance again and again. In one of his dives he caught sight of a little silver fish running along among the pebbles, so he took three or

four more dips to get a better view of him. This rather startled the fish, who thought he had better speed his way in some other direction, as he did not wish to become more nearly acquainted with any creature who looked as big as Fleetwing and yet who moved about so very fast. He shook his little silvery tail, as much as to say, "No more of this," and was off like a shot.

But Master Fleetwing was after him, thinking that now was the time to try how fast he really could go, so, mounting to the top of the water, but keeping his eyes fixed on

"Fleetwing was after him"

his little friend, he gave chase, and managed to keep on at a very rapid pace.

The fish grew more and more alarmed, dodging about hither and thither, sometimes hiding behind a pebble, sometimes getting under, but always some of his little sparkling body showing beyond, so that Fleetwing never lost sight of him, and was getting far too excited in the chase to notice that he had gone ahead of his party. On and on for a bit farther, and the poor hunted fish was beginning to be quite worn out, when, fortunately, there appeared a rushy bank straight in front of them. Now

or never for the fish! He dived in and out, up and down among the rushes, till he got right into the thick of them, and then stopped to take breath, feeling certain that no enemy could spy him there, had he never such sharp eyes.

Fleetwing could not give up yet, but followed on till at last his feet grew entangled among the rushes and grass, and he could hardly drag them along. But where was he to go next? He could not even see his way out of it by this time, as there seemed rushes all round him, and it was difficult to imagine how he had got in so far. He was looking around him on all sides, when he fancied he saw something gleaming at him between those tall reeds on the left. They must be a pair of eyes, and such cruel, horrid-looking eyes! They were moving now, and belonged to a large dark body which was slowly approaching him. Poor little Fleetwing! He turned round, and tried to run away; but no, he could not drag himself through all this thick grass. There was the creature, oh, so near! He uttered a piercing scream, then another and another.

Fortunately for Fleetwing, his father was much nearer him than he imagined. Mr. Moorhen had missed his eldest chick for some time, and had swum off rapidly in the direction of the rushes, fancying he must be hiding among them. At Fleetwing's first scream his father darted in, and, guided by the sounds, soon reached the right spot—only just in time! Another minute, and his poor little chick would have come to an untimely end, for the strange creature was no other than their enemy, one of the Water-Rats. When the Rat caught sight of Mr. Moorhen, he turned tail and slunk away among the rushes, muttering to himself it was only to wait till the evening, when he would have a feast and to spare.

As they had all had a pretty good swim for that day, the parents resolved to turn back towards the island. They little imagined they would have to make another long journey before that day was quite over.

"I'm glad we are returning early, for poor Spotty's sake," said Mrs. Moorhen. "He must find it lonely! There's the nest! I wonder we don't see his little head peeping up to look for us. Perhaps he is asleep. Come, children, make haste! It is time we caught sight of Brother Spotty."

On hurried the little mother ahead of the others, for she was beginning to feel uneasy. They all peeped over into the nest. What! no Spotty there, or anywhere near, as far as she could see! She called out his name, and her husband and children joined in the cry, but received no answer. Then they decided he must have got over the side of the nest somehow, and started off on an expedition on his own account. He could not have gone far, and would be sure to be back soon, especially as the sun had just sunk and it would be getting dark. However, Mrs. Moorhen did not feel at all easy, and resolved, as soon as she had got the three others safe in the nest, off she would start in search of her youngest chick, and would not return without him.

"My dear, here is someone sailing up to the island—in rather a stately manner, I must say," said Mr. Moorhen, "holding his head pretty high—and well he may with such a long neck. He's wonderfully like my old friend Gander—just such another looking fellow. Very slow he used to be! Good-natured, too; he had a foolish trick of laughing at everything. Not too much sense in his head, either! This fellow here must certainly be one of the family, though when I knew him he had not a chick of

his own. He had just married Mrs. Goose of Willow Farm."

Dowdy and Ruffle popped their heads out of the nest, but soon drew them in again, for the visitor was close alongside.

Our old friend Master Gosling was never much of a speaker, but he soon introduced himself to Mr. and Mrs. Moorhen, mentioning his father's name, and he then assured them of the safety of their little Spotty. He next told them of the great danger they were in from an attack of the Water-Rats. Poor Mrs. Moorhen was quite dismayed at the news, thinking what would become of her young family. Then the thought of Spotty's safety consoled her a little.

"We'll have a fight, my dear, for the children's sake," she said bravely to Mr. Moorhen. "The Water-Rats shan't have them if we can help it. Fleetwing has already been saved from one. They have evidently a spite against our family."

"But, ma'am," began Master Gosling, "you needn't stay here to be even attacked by them. Spotty says you are all to come over to him, and he would have come himself to fetch you, only he is ordering a fine nest to be built for you near us, on the other side of the water. It was almost finished when I left, and you must all start at once, as it is just dark, and the moon's face will appear in the flap of a wing."

You may be sure they did not delay much after this. Though the young ones were very sleepy, they managed to tumble out of the nest. Fleetwing especially had already had enough of Water-Rats, and would very much like to see the new nest that Spotty was having built.

Master Gosling led the way, and helped the young ones

along every now and then. He amused them by telling them of the race Spotty and he had had. It was too dark now for them to run any race. Poor little Dowdy and Ruffle could hardly see at all, and thought they would have to go on travelling for ever, as they could never reach any place in such darkness as this.

"Won't it be terrible, Ruffle, to shiver in the cold all night?" murmured Dowdy.

"Yes," answered Ruffle, "and my tiresome feathers will stand up, so that all the cold air rushes in between them. As fast as I smooth down one feather another sticks up."

Fleetwing here caught sight of a little star just rising above the edge of the water, and declared it must be the eye of a Water-Rat, and begged to hide under Gosling's wing.

"That's only our lighthouse," said Gosling; "it is just over our home. When we are out late and it's a clear night, we steer straight for that star. It's guiding us all right now. You see that great tall tree? We live just by it. Hark!"

The air seemed filled with sound. On they all hurried till they could plainly distinguish coming through the darkness a chorus of voices, shouting: "Welcome to the Moorhens! Long live Mr. and Mrs. Moorhen, and all the little Moor-chicks! Their house is quite ready! Welcome home!"

"That's Spotty's voice!" cried Mrs. Moorhen; "I should know it anywhere!"

Surrounded by all his Gosling friends, Spotty was scarcely visible till he darted out from among them, and proudly offered to conduct his parents to their new nest. They all agreed that it was an ill wind that blows no one

any good, for if the Water-Rats had been twice disappointed, their meditated attack had driven the Moorhens across the water to become neighbours and friends of the Goslings. Mr. Moorhen was right in saying Mr. Gander was a very good-natured bird. He was loud in expressing a welcome to his friend and his friend's family, and as for the young Goslings, they could not make enough of their funny little playfellows. Mrs. Moorhen and Mrs. Goose found they had plenty to gossip over together, and as for Spotty and Gosling, they became inseparable companions. They made many vain expeditions in search of the North Pole, and could not think why they never found it!

THE ADVENTURES OF CHANTICLEER & PARTLET

I

How they went to the Mountains to eat Nuts

"THE nuts are quite ripe now," said Chanticleer to his wife Partlet: "suppose we go together to the mountains, and eat as many as we can, before the squirrel takes them all away?"

"With all my heart," said Partlet. "Let us go and make a holiday of it together."

So they went to the mountains; and as it was a lovely day, they stayed there till the evening. Now, whether it was that they had eaten so many nuts that they could not walk, or whether they were lazy and would not, I do not know. However, they took it into their heads that it did not become them to go home on foot. So

Chanticleer began to build a little carriage of nutshells; and when it was finished, Partlet jumped into it and sat down, and bade Chanticleer harness himself to it, and draw her home.

"That's a good joke!" said Chanticleer. "No, that will never do; I had rather by half walk home. I'll sit on the box and be coachman, if you like, but I'll not draw."

While this was happening, a Duck came quacking up, and cried out: "You thieving vagabonds! what business have you in my grounds? I'll give it you well for your insolence!" And upon that she fell upon Chanticleer most lustily. But Chanticleer was no coward, and paid back the Duck's blows with his sharp spurs so fiercely that she soon began to cry out for mercy, which was only granted on her agreeing to draw the carriage home for them. This she said she would do; and Chanticleer got upon the box and drove off, crying: "Now, Duck, get on as fast as you can." And away they went at a pretty good pace.

After they had travelled along a little way, they met a Needle and a Pin walking together along the road; and the Needle cried out, "Stop, stop!" and said it was so dark that they could hardly find their way, and the road so dirty that they could not get on at all. He told him that he and his friend the Pin had been at an inn a few miles off, and had sat there talking till they had forgotten how late it was. So he begged that the travellers would be so kind as to give them a lift in their carriage. Chanticleer, observing that they were but thin fellows, and not likely to take up much room, told them they might ride, but made them promise not to dirty the wheels of the carriage in getting in, nor to tread on Partlet's toes.

Late at night they reached an inn; and as it was bad

travelling in the dark, and the Duck seemed much tired, and waddled about a good deal from one side to the other, they made up their minds to fix their quarters there. But the landlord at first was unwilling, and said his house was full; for he thought they might not be very respectable company. However, they spoke civilly to him, and gave him an egg which Partlet had laid by the way, and said they would give him the Duck, who was in the habit of laying one every day. So at last he let them come in, and they bespoke a handsome supper, and spent the evening very jollily.

Early in the morning, before it was quite light, and when nobody was stirring in the inn, Chanticleer awakened his wife, and, fetching the egg, they pecked a hole in it, ate it up, and threw the shell into the fireplace. They then went to the Pin and Needle, who were fast asleep, and, seizing them by the heads, stuck one into the landlord's easy-chair and the other into his handkerchief. Having done this, they crept away as softly as possible, and went on with their journey. But the Duck, who slept in the open air in the yard, heard them coming, and jumping into the brook which ran close by the inn, soon swam off, clear out of their reach.

An hour or two afterwards the landlord got up, and took his handkerchief to wipe his face, but the Pin ran into him and pricked him; then he walked into the kitchen to light his pipe at the fire, but when he stirred it up the egg-shells flew into his eyes, and almost blinded him.

"Bless me!" said he, "all the world seems to have a plot against my head this morning." And so saying, he threw himself sulkily into his easy-chair; but, oh dear! the Needle ran into him; and this time the pain was not in his head. He now flew into a very great

rage, and, thinking it must be the company who had come in the night before, he made out their bill for their night's lodging, and went to look after them. But they were all off ; so he swore that he never again would take in such a troop of vagabonds, who ate a great deal, paid no reckoning, and gave him nothing for his trouble but their apish tricks.

II

How Partlet died and was buried, and how Chanticleer died of Grief

Another day Chanticleer and Partlet agreed to go again to the hills to eat nuts ; and it was settled that all the nuts which they found should be shared equally between them. Now Partlet found a very large nut ; but she said nothing about it to Chanticleer, and kept it all to herself. However, it was so big that she could not swallow it, and it stuck in her throat. Then she was in a great fright, and cried out to Chanticleer : " Pray run as fast as you can and fetch me some water, or I shall be choked."

Chanticleer ran as fast as he could to the River, and said : " River, give me some water, for Partlet lies on the hill, and will be choked by a great nut."

But the River said : " Run first to the Bride, and ask her for a silken cord to draw up the water."

Then Chanticleer ran to the Bride, and said : " Bride, you must give me a silken cord, for then the River will give me water, and the water I will carry to Partlet, who lies on the mountain, and will be choked by a great nut."

But the Bride said : " Run first, and bring me my garland, that is hanging on a willow in the garden."

Then Chanticleer ran to the garden, and took the

garland from the bough where it hung, and brought it to the Bride ; and the Bride gave him the silken cord, and he took the silken cord to the River, and the River gave him water, and he carried the water to Partlet. But in the meantime she was choked by the great nut, and lay quite dead, and never stirred any more.

Then Chanticleer was very sorry, and cried bitterly ; and all the Beasts came and wept with him over poor Partlet. And six Mice built a little hearse to carry her to her grave, for Chanticleer wished she should be buried in the family burying-ground. And when it was ready, they harnessed themselves to it, and Chanticleer drove them.

On the way they met the Fox. " Where are you going, Chanticleer ?" said he.

" To bury my Partlet," said the other.

" May I go with you ?" said the Fox.

" Yes ; but you must get up behind, or my horses will not be able to draw you."

Then the Fox got up behind ; and soon the Wolf, the Bear, the Goat, and all the Beasts of the wood, came and climbed up behind the hearse.

So on they went, till, just as they got home, they came to a swift stream.

" How shall we get over ?" said Chanticleer.

Then a Straw said : " I will lay myself across, and you may pass over upon me." But as the Mice were going over, the Straw slipped away and fell into the water, and the six Mice all fell in, and were drowned.

What was to be done ? Then a large Log of Wood came, and said : " I am big enough. I will lay myself across the stream, and you shall pass over upon me."

So he laid himself down ; but they managed so clumsily that the Log of Wood fell in, and was carried away by

the stream. Then a Stone came up and kindly offered to help poor Chanticleer by laying himself across the stream ; and this time he got safely to the other side with the hearse, and managed to get Partlet out of it. But the Fox and the other mourners, who were sitting behind,

"Chanticleer drove the six Mice."

were too heavy, and fell back into the water, and were all carried away by the stream and drowned.

Thus Chanticleer was left alone with his dead Partlet. And having dug a grave for her, close by the house where she and all the family were born, he laid her in it, and buried her. Then he pined away by the side of her grave, and wept and wailed, till at last he died too ; and thus all the party were dead.

THE TOMTIT & THE BEAR

ONE bright summer's day, as Mr. Bruin the Bear and his friend the Wolf were taking a walk together arm-in-arm in a wood, they heard a bird singing merrily.

"Hist, hist, brother! Stop a bit," said the Bear. "What can that dear bird be that sings so sweetly?"

"My dear friend Bruin," said the Wolf, "why, don't you know? That is His Majesty the King of Birds. We must take care to show him all kinds of honour!" (But it was really only a Tomtit, after all.)

"If that be the case," said the Bear gravely, "I should very much like to see the royal palace; so pray come along and show it me!"

"Softly, my dear friend," said the Wolf; "we cannot see it just yet, for Her Majesty is not at home; we had better call again when the Queen comes home."

Soon afterwards the Queen came, with food in her beak,

and she and the King, her husband, began to feed their young ones.

"Now for it!" said the Bear; "the family are at dinner." So he was about to follow them, to see what was to be seen.

"Stop a little, Master Bruin," said the Wolf; "we must wait now till Their Majesties are gone again." So they marked the hole where they had seen the nest and went away.

But the Bear, being very eager to see the royal palace, soon slipped away, wishing his friend "Good-morning," and came back again, and, peeping into the nest, saw five or six young birds lying at the bottom of it.

"What nonsense!" said Bruin. "This is not a royal palace; I never saw such a filthy place in my life, and you are no royal children, you little base-born brats!"

As soon as the young Tomtits heard this they were very angry, and screamed out: "We are not base-born, you brute of a Bear! Our father and mother are good honest people. You shall be well paid for your slander!"

At this the Bear grew frightened, and ran away to his den.

But the young Tomtits kept crying and screaming, and when their father and mother came home and offered them food, they all said: "We will not touch a bit—no, not the leg of a fly, though we should die of hunger—till that rascal Bruin has been well trounced for calling us base-born brats!"

"Make yourselves easy, my darlings," said the old King; "you may be sure he shall have his due."

So he went out, and stood before the Bear's den, and cried out with a loud voice: "Bruin the Bear, thou hast shamefully wronged our lawful children; we therefore do

hereby declare war against thee and thine, which shall never cease until thou hast had thy due, thou wicked one!"

Now, when the Bear heard this, he gathered together the Ox, the Ass, the Stag, and all the Beasts of the earth, in order to talk about what he should do, and how to get up an army. And the Tomtit, on his side, gathered together all the Birds of the air, both great and small, and a very large army of Hornets, Gnats, Bees, and Flies, and other Insects.

As the time drew near when the war was to begin, the Tomtit sent out spies to see who was the Commander-in-Chief of the enemy's forces. And the Gnat, who was by far the cleverest spy of them all, flew backwards and forwards in the wood where the Bear's troops were, and at last hid himself under a leaf on a tree close by which the orders of the day were given out. Then the Bear, who was standing so near the tree that the Gnat could hear all he said, called to the Fox, and said: "Reynard, you are the cleverest of all the Beasts; therefore you shall be our Chief, and lead us to battle; but we must first agree upon some signal, by which we may know what you want us to do."

"Behold," said the Fox, "I have a fine long bushy tail, which looks like a plume of red feathers, and gives me a very warlike air. Now bear in mind, when you see me raise up my tail, you may be sure that the battle goes well, and that you have nothing to do but to rush down upon the enemy with all your force. On the other hand, if I drop my tail, the day is lost, and you must run away as fast as you can."

Now, when the Gnat had heard all this, she flew back to the Tomtit, and told him everything that had passed.

At length the day came when the battle was to be

fought, and as soon as it was light, behold! the army of Beasts came rushing forward with such a fearful sound that the earth shook. And His Majesty the Tomtit, with his troops, came flying along in warlike array, flapping and fluttering and beating the air, so that it was quite frightful to hear, and both armies set themselves in order

"Reynard could bear it no longer."

of battle upon the field. Now the Tomtit gave orders to a troop of Hornets that at the first onset they should march straight towards Captain Reynard, and fixing themselves about his tail, should sting him with all their might and main.

The Hornets did as they were told, and when Reynard felt the first sting, he started aside and shook one of his

legs, but still held up his tail with wonderful bravery. At the second sting he was forced to drop his tail for a moment. But when the third Hornet had fixed itself, he could bear it no longer, but clapped his tail between his legs, and scampered away as fast as he could. As soon as the Beasts saw this they thought, of course, that all was lost, and scoured across the country in the greatest dismay, leaving the Birds masters of the field.

Then the King and Queen flew back to their children, and said : " Now, children, eat, drink, and be merry, for the battle is won !"

But the young Birds said : " No ! no ! not till Master Bruin has humbly begged our pardon for calling us base-born."

So the King flew off to the Bear's den, and cried out : " Thou villain Bear ! come forthwith to my abode, and humbly beseech my children to forgive thee ; for if thou wilt not do this, every bone in thy wretched body shall be broken into twenty pieces."

Then the Bear was forced to crawl out of his den very sulkily, and do what the King bade him ; and after that the cloth was laid and the table spread, and the young Birds sat down together, and ate and drank and made merry till midnight.

A MOUSE one day, having been chased by a Weasel, found himself near a lake. He was very thirsty from his flight, and dipped his whiskered mouth in the cool, sweet water to drink. A Frog who lived in the marsh chanced to spy him, and addressed him in his harsh, croaking voice.

"Stranger, who are you?" he asked. "From what land have you come, and of what estate is your sire? Tell me truly; let me not catch you in a lie. If I learn that you are worthy of friendship, I will take you to my home, and give you rich gifts. Know that I am King Swell-cheek, whom all the hordes of Frogs in this lake own as lord. My father was Mud, and my mother the famous Ruler-of-the-Waters. You seem a great chief also by your look, well worthy to be a mighty King. Tell me quickly, I pray you, your race and lineage."

To him Crumb-thief the Mouse answered and said: "Why do you ask me my lineage? All the world, all

Beasts who dwell on earth or in the sky, know that I am Crumb-thief, son of Bread-nibbler the Great and Meal-licker, his lady wife, of the race of King Bacon-gnawer. I have learned to live well on figs and bread and nuts, and delicate foods of all kinds ; and how can I be a friend to you, since neither in our manner of life nor in our dwelling-place is there likeness between us ? You live in the waters, but I share the very food of man himself. Well-rounded loaves, cakes, bacon, baked meats—those I eat ; nay, I fear not man himself, for all his bulk, but clamber upon his bed and nibble his toes as he lies snoring. Two things only do I dread—the Hawk and the Weasel, who wage war always on my race ; and traps also I abhor. Such is my estate. No cabbages nor green herbs for me ; they are your food."

"You praise your appetite overmuch, stranger," answered King Swell-cheek. "But we frogs also have wonders to boast of. It is given to us to live at once on land and in the waters, to leap on the earth's broad surface, and to bathe our bodies in the lake. If you wish to see the joys of our life, get upon my back, hold me firmly, and I will bear you safely to my dwelling-place."

He offered his back to the Mouse, and Crumb-thief leapt upon it, and put his arms round the Frog's neck, and was carried out into the water. At first he rejoiced at his new position, and looked round him fearlessly. But presently the lake grew deeper, and the water ran in great dark waves. Crumb-thief felt uneasy and lost, and wept for terror. He pressed his knees close into his rider, and clung to the Frog in panic, tearing his hair and listening to the loud beating of his heart. In vain his tail lay spread out upon the water behind him like a rudder. He was helpless and afraid.

Suddenly, in the midst of this terror, a horrible Water-snake appeared, and thrust its long neck above the water. At that dread sight Swell-cheek in turn became afraid. Forgetting his guest, trembling upon his back, he dived to the very bottom of the lake, to save his own skin from the terrible Serpent.

And now indeed Crumb-thief was in a parlous case. He rose and sank in the waves, clasping his paws in agony, and struggling feebly against the flood. His fur was soon soaked with water, and the weight of it dragged him down and wearied him. With his last breath he lifted up his voice and upbraided the heedless Frog.

"Swell-cheek, you shall not escape punishment for this vile deed. You have cast me helpless into this roaring sea. On land you could never have vied with me, whether in fighting or in a race. I say to you that the hosts of the Mice shall avenge me!"

With that he yielded up his life. But there was one on the bank of the lake who heard his dying words—Dish-licker, famous among all mice. At the grievous sight he lifted up his voice in a great cry, and ran swiftly to his comrades with the tidings; and when they heard of Crumb-thief's fate heavy anger filled them all. They sent messengers throughout the land of the Mice, and bade all loyal subjects repair at dawn to the house of Bread-nibbler, Crumb-thief's sire.

As the sun rose bright and fair, the Mice came in their due ranks and precedence to Bread-nibbler's spacious hall; and he, bowed down by grief for his lost son, stood up and addressed them.

"Friends, sorrow comes to all," he said, "and we cannot expect happiness without end; but I have suffered a terrible thing at the Frog's hands. Three children have

I lost. One, hard by the very door of his home, was taken by a wicked weasel; the second cruel Men lured into a snare with wiles of unwonted cunning, and slew; and now the third, my well-loved Crumb-thief, has been drawn down into the deeps by Swell-cheek the Frog. Come to arms! Let us put on our stoutest armour, and make war on the murderer!"

His words made their blood run like fire through their veins. They flew to arm themselves. First they put on their greaves of green bean-pods, gnawed through by a night's labour, and split to suit their limbs. Then came the breastplates of hide, taken from a dead weasel, and skilfully dressed with feathered quills. For shields they had the boss of a lantern, and for spears long needles, worthy to have been fashioned by the War-God himself; and on their heads were helmets of nutshells.

Thus the Mice made ready for war. But the Frogs, when they heard of these doings, were filled with wonder, and came together in a vast crowd to learn what the preparations meant. Even as they sat in close-packed circles on the lake shore, talking and asking a thousand questions, there came to them a solemn herald, Pot-creeper himself, with a sceptre of office in his hand. He was the worthy son of Cheese-borer the Great-hearted, a mighty warrior; and he bore a grim message of war to the lake-dwellers.

"Frogs," he said, drawing himself up proudly, "the Mice have sent me to bid you arm yourselves for war and battle. Your King Swell-cheek has slain Crumb-thief, whose death we shall mightily avenge. Arm yourselves; make ready, you Frogs who have no fear of us."

Thus he spoke; and when he had delivered his message, he went back to his own people. The Frogs heard him

with mingled wrath and dread ; but presently they began to murmur against Swell-cheek, whose deed had led them into this strait. Swell-cheek was no craven. He stood up in their midst and answered their complaints.

" Friends, Crumb-thief does not owe his death to me, nor did I see him lose his life. He perished through his own youthful pride and boastfulness, in that he sought to swim in the lake even as we Frogs do, who are the best swimmers in the world. Yet, though it was his own fault, these Mice unjustly vow vengeance on us ! Come, let us take counsel how we may conquer and utterly destroy the vainglorious race of Mice. Let all our legions assemble here on the lake-shore, fully armed—here, where the bank is steepest. Then, when the enemy cast themselves upon us, let us each take the Mouse that is opposite to us, and throw him headlong over our backs into the water, where the whole vile horde of them will perish miserably."

The plan seemed good, and forthwith the Frogs in turn sought out their best armour—broad mallow leaves rolled round their legs, green beet leaves for breastplates, shields of colewort, long sharp bulrushes for spears, and a snail-shell helmet on every head.

Meanwhile, Jupiter, the King of the Gods, looked down from the gods' dwelling-place in Olympus, and saw the tumult.

" Who of us immortals," he asked, " will aid the Frogs ? Who is on the side of the Mice ? Daughter Minerva, will you not go down to earth to help your Mice ? Are they not often in your temples honouring you by eating the scraps and crumbs ?"

" Never will I aid the Mice, sire," replied the Goddess. " They are my enemies. They steal the oil and eat the

lampwicks in my temples. Ay, and worse! See this fair robe which by hard toil I have made, spinning the thread and working with my own hands! Look at the Mice's work. They have gnawed and bitten it through, and spoilt it all; and what is more, it was made of borrowed stuff, and I was to pay it back. No help for Bread-nibbler from me! Neither will I give aid to the Frogs. They are my enemies too. Lately, when I was weary and wished to sleep, they raised their voices in chorus, and made so loud a din that my eyes did not close till cock-crow. Let none of us gods take part in this quarrel. These be dangerous folk, and fierce when they are angered. Perchance, if we drew too near the battle, their weapons might wound even us. Let us watch them in safety here on high Olympus."

The immortals agreed, and watched eagerly the preparations for war. Soon all was ready; the Gnats trumpeted the signal for advance, and the great battle began.

First of the Frogs to the fight came Loud-bawler, and drove his spear right through the body of Licker. But Hole-searcher avenged the loss by slaying Muddy, smiting him in the breast, so that he fell dead without a word. Cabbage-biter the Fat, ever foremost in the banquets of the lake, fled before the foe, and turned to the water; but ere he could gain safety he was struck down from behind by a pursuing Mouse. Herb-lover fled in like manner before Ham-borer, and, more fleet of foot than Cabbage-biter, gained the lake in safety, while Ham-borer turned back from the water's brink, and raged among the enemy like a wounded boar. But bitter fate cut him short ere long. Water-lover, a warrior of mighty stature, hurled at him a great stone, that crashed through

"The great battle began."

the nut-helmet, and dashed the brave Mouse's brains out.

So the fight swayed this way and that, the Frogs now winning, now the Mice. On either side the chieftains were to the fore, Swell-cheek encouraging his men with his huge bulrush spear, Bread-nibbler, with voice and deed, stirring the Mice to greater and greater efforts. Presently the two came together. Bread-nibbler raised his needle aloft, and thrust with all his might. The point shot forward, and pierced Swell-cheek's foot, wounding him grievously. He yielded ground, drew back, and stepped at last into the lake. But a young Frog, Garlic-lover, saw his King in distress, and boldly interposed himself between Swell-cheek and the victorious Mouse. He lifted up his spear, and hurled it fiercely; but alas! his strength was too puny. The bulrush was caught easily upon Bread-nibbler's shield, and fell with a tinkle to the ground, useless.

And now strode in yet another warrior, the noble and mighty Share-stealer, who stalked along the shore, vowing to destroy all the race of frogs; and surely he would have kept his vow, and slain both Garlic-lover and Swell-cheek outright, had not the father of the gods, Jupiter himself, looked down with pity on the dread battle.

"See, sons and daughters," he said to the immortals on Olympus, "how fearful is this bloodthirsty strife! My eyes are aghast at the slaughter. See, too, how Share-stealer stands in his pride and strength threatening destruction to all the Frogs. But he shall not have his will; I will send Mars and Minerva down to the battle, and bid it cease."

"That is no place for Mars and Minerva, sire," said Juno; "even their might could not save the Frogs now,

so strong and stout-hearted are those Mice. Nothing short of your dread thunderbolts will calm their wrath. Hurl them, sire, and make these fearful deeds come to an end."

She spoke, and Jove took up his thunderbolts and loosed his lightnings. A horrible rumbling filled the earth, and the sky flamed. The Frogs quaked at the awful sound, and the Mice, too, felt fear; but not for a moment did they cease their efforts. More fiercely than before they set upon the Frogs, and would have killed every one of them had not Jupiter tried yet another plan, and sent new troops to help the exhausted Frogs. As the fight was fiercest there suddenly issued from the lake a strange and terrible army. Clad all in invulnerable mail, with long crooked claws for weapons, they pounced upon the Mice. But they did not march as an ordinary foe; they walked sideways on eight horny legs, and fought as well from their tails as from their heads. Men call them crabs, and they were a powerful ally to the Frogs, their neighbours in the lake. They bit and pinched the Mice with more than mortal strength; none could pierce their scaly armour, and upon it the stoutest weapons were shivered to pieces. They snipped off the tails of the Mice, they wounded their feet, they broke their needle spears. In a little while the Mice were in panic, and at last they who were so lately conquerors turned and fled back, beaten, to their holes.

Sunset came; the sun fell below the western horizon; and with the day thus ended the great battle of the Frogs and Mice.

Adapted from the Greek.

THE THREE BEARS.

ONCE upon a time there was a cottage in a wood wherein lived three Bears.

The first was a Great Big Bear, the second was a Middle-sized Bear, and the third and last was a Little Tiny Wee Bear.

Each one of the three Bears had his own porridge-bowl. The Great Big Bear had a great big bowl, the Middle-sized Bear had a middle-sized bowl, and the Little Tiny Wee Bear had a little tiny wee bowl all to himself. Then there were three chairs in the cottage. There was a great big chair for the Great Big Bear, and a middle-sized chair for the Middle-sized Bear, and a little tiny wee chair for the Little Tiny Wee Bear. There were also three beds upstairs. The Great Big Bear had a great big bed, the Middle-sized Bear had a middle-sized bed, and the Little Tiny Wee Bear had a little tiny wee bed as ever you saw.

One fine morning, when the Great Big Bear had poured his porridge into his great big bowl, and the Middle-sized

Bear had poured his into his middle-sized bowl, and the Little Tiny Wee Bear had put a little tiny wee drop into his little tiny wee bowl, they all went out for a walk in the forest while the porridge got cool. While they were out, a Little Old Woman came by the cottage. She peeped in at the window, and then she peeped in at the keyhole, and when she was quite sure that there was no one in the house, she lifted the latch and walked in, as cool as you

"The chair was not strong enough: down she fell!"

please. The Little Old Woman took a good look all round, and when she saw the porridge bowls on the table, she licked her lips with delight. First she tried the great big bowl, but it was too hot; then she tried the middle-sized bowl, but it was too cold; then she tried the little tiny wee bowl, and it was so good that she ate it all up.

"Now for a rest," said she; and she climbed up into the great big chair, but it was too hard, so she climbed down again. Then she stood on her tip-toes and sat upon

the middle-sized chair, but she found it too soft. Then she sat down in the little tiny wee chair, and it was neither too hard nor too soft, but just right; and there she would have stayed, only that the chair was not strong enough: down she fell, and was left sitting on the floor!

"Upon my word!" cried the Old Woman, "there is no peace and comfort anywhere out of bed!" And she bounced upstairs into the Bears' bedroom.

"This is better!" said she, as she clambered on to the Great Big Bear's bed; but it was too high at the head to please her, so down she scrambled. Then she got upon the Middle-sized Bear's bed, but it was too low at the foot to suit her, so she rolled herself off that. Last of all she got into the Little Tiny Wee Bear's bed, and it was neither too high nor too low, but just right, and there she tucked herself up and went fast asleep.

Presently the three Bears came home again to eat their porridge. When they came to the table the Great Big Bear cried out in his great big voice:

"SOMEBODY HAS BEEN AT MY PORRIDGE!"

for he saw the spoon sticking up in it as the Little Old Woman had left it. And the Middle-sized Bear cried, in his middle-sized voice:

"SOMEBODY HAS BEEN AT MY PORRIDGE TOO!"

for his spoon was also sticking up straight. Then the Little Tiny Wee Bear saw that his porridge-bowl was quite empty, and he squeaked out in his little tiny wee voice:

"Somebody has been at my porridge, and has eaten it all up!"

So the three Bears looked about them, wondering who had been into their cottage without leave, and the Great

Big Bear noticed that the cushions in his chair were pushed crooked, and cried out in his great big voice :

"SOMEBODY HAS BEEN SITTING IN MY CHAIR!"

Then the Middle-sized Bear looked at his chair, and saw the cushions squashed flat where the old woman had sat upon them, and cried, in his middle-sized voice :

"SOMEBODY HAS BEEN SITTING IN MY CHAIR TOO!"

And last of all the Little Tiny Wee Bear saw his little tiny wee chair all broken, and cried out, in his little tiny wee voice :

"Somebody has been sitting in my chair, and has broken it all to bits!"

After this the three Bears rushed upstairs to their bedroom, and there they found the pillows of the great big bed pulled out of place.

"SOMEBODY HAS BEEN LYING IN MY BED!"

said the Great Big Bear, in his great big voice.

Then the Middle-sized Bear saw that the quilt had been pulled aside on his middle-sized bed, and called out in his middle-sized voice :

"SOMEBODY HAS BEEN LYING IN MY BED TOO!"

And lastly the Little Tiny Wee Bear looked into his little tiny wee bed, and saw the Little Old Woman lying there asleep, and he cried, in his little tiny wee voice :

"Somebody has been lying in my bed, and here she is!"

Now the Little Old Woman heard the great big voice of the Great Big Bear in her sleep, but she took no more notice of it than if it had been the noise of the wind or of the thunder. And she heard the middle-sized voice of

the Middle-sized Bear too, but it only sounded to her like a voice in her dreams. But when she heard the little tiny wee voice of the Little Tiny Wee Bear, it was so shrill that she woke up with a jump, and saw the three Bears standing round her bed. Up she sprang in a terrible fright. She took one jump out of bed, another out of the window, and a third over the fence, and the three Bears saw no more of her from that day to this.

Adapted by E. L. Darton.

THE MOUSE, THE BIRD, AND THE SAUSAGE.

ONCE upon a time three creatures set up house together, and they were a Mouse, a Bird, and a Sausage. They lived together very comfortably, for each had a special gift for a different kind of work, and so their house was well cared for. The Bird, who could fly very swiftly, brought in wood for the fire every day for the next day; the Mouse, who was very strong, drew the water from the well; and the Sausage, who was a very quiet, stay-at-home sort of person, happened also to be an excellent cook, so he managed the kitchen matters, and prepared the meals. The Bird had the busiest time of the three, for he could only carry one or two twigs at a time, and had to make a good many journeys backwards and forwards fetching fuel from the woods. When the Mouse had drawn the water, she could go into her own little room and rest until it was time to lay the table for the next meal. She had also to wash up the dishes, but that is nothing when one is thoroughly used to it. The Sausage had the easiest

time of all, for he had only to watch and see that the pot did not boil over, and when the broth or the vegetables were nearly cooked, it was his pleasant duty to jump into the pot and roll himself round two or three times to

"The Mouse had to wash up the dishes."

give them a flavour. He had a thick skin, and quite enjoyed this part of the preparations.

For some time the three friends were very happy and contented, each doing his duty cheerfully and in a pleasant manner. Whichever woke first in the morning would call the others, and it nearly always fell to the lot of Flyaway the Bird to rouse his companions, for he was a light

sleeper, and generally woke at dawn. As for the fat Sausage, he would have slept all day and all night too if he had not been pulled out of bed ; but he was so good-tempered that he never got angry, even when the Mouse poured his little pail full of water over him, or the Bird slapped him with a twig to wake him up.

But this happy state of things did not go on for ever. As often happens when people have all they want, and are well fed and comfortable, the three friends began to look about for something to complain of. The Bird one morning met another Bird when he was out gathering sticks, to whom he began boasting of his comfortable home.

"Poof!" said the strange Bird, "you seem to be a pretty simple fellow! Here you are toiling away gathering sticks, while your companions are sitting cosily at home resting themselves. No wonder your home is comfortable!"

"What you say is very true," answered Flyaway, "but it is never too late to mend."

So he flew home without any sticks, and began very angrily to complain of his hard life.

"We must make a new arrangement," said he, "and divide the work differently. I am tired of slaving for you two fat things."

"Oh dear! oh dear!" sighed the Sausage, whose name was Roundabout; "I dislike changes very much; they are most unsettling."

"So do I," said Squeaker the Mouse. "We each do our fair share, it seems to me, and we have been very happy for a long time like this."

"You are silly and old-fashioned," replied Flyaway shortly. "There is nothing like moving with the times. If our partnership is to go on, I must have a better position."

They argued for a long time, but nothing would persuade the Bird to change his mind ; and at last, for the sake of peace, the others were obliged to give way, and agree to draw lots to see who should perform the different tasks. When this was done, it was found that the Sausage must fetch in the wood, the Bird draw the water, and the Mouse do the cooking.

The next morning the three set to work in this new way. The Sausage started off early to the forest to collect sticks, and when he was out of sight—which was not for some time, for he was a very slow walker—the Bird and the Mouse drew the water, and put the cooking-pot on the fire to boil.

" Roundabout is a long time gone," said the Mouse presently.

" He has been lazy too long, and grown fat," answered the Bird. " You will see how he will run after a few days of hard work !"

They waited and waited, but still the Sausage did not appear. The Bird and the Mouse grew very hungry, and at last the Bird lost patience, and went out to find the Sausage, for they would not begin their meal until he had flavoured it.

The Bird had not flown very far before he met a large Dog.

" Good-morning, Barker," said he politely. " Have you seen a Sausage anywhere ?"

" Yes," said the Dog, " I have."

" And where is he now ?" asked Flyaway eagerly.

" To tell you the truth," answered the Dog, " I have swallowed him, and found him very good to the taste."

" Oh, you villain !" shrieked the unhappy Bird. " How

dared you do so! Do you not know that you have committed a murder?"

"Nothing of the kind," answered Barker. "The Sausage was a false Sausage masquerading as a working man, and those sort of people are best out of the way. If I had seen him in his proper place by the kitchen fire I should have respected him, but in the woods he was my lawful prey."

The Bird flew home lamenting and weeping to tell the sad tale to the Mouse, and they were both very grieved, and had no heart for their dinner for some time. At last, however, they resolved to dry their tears and set to work.

"Crying does not mend matters," said the Bird, who always had a proverb ready. So the Mouse tended the pot, and the Bird set the table for dinner, and felt very sad when he only laid two places instead of three.

Presently he came to the kitchen to tell the Mouse to dish up, and, lo and behold! there was no sign of the cook anywhere. The poor Mouse, wishing to flavour the dish as the Sausage used to, had jumped into the pot, and been scalded to death. The Bird called and shouted, and hunted everywhere but in the right place, and then, getting frightened, he threw the wood about the kitchen floor in his haste. Some of it, falling near the hearth, caught fire, and began to blaze. The Bird rushed off to fill his pail with water, but, having done so only once before, he managed to drop the pail into the well, and to fall in after it, where he was instantly drowned. So that was the end of the Mouse, the Bird, and the Sausage.

Adapted from the Brothers Grimm by E. L. Darton.

THE JACKAL & THE ALLIGATOR.

A HUNGRY Jackal once went down to the riverside in search of little crabs, bits of fish, and whatever else he could find for his dinner. Now it chanced that in this river there lived a great big Alligator, who, being also very hungry, would have been extremely glad to eat the Jackal.

The Jackal ran up and down, here and there, but for a long time could find nothing to eat. At last, close to where the Alligator was lying, among some tall bulrushes under the clear shallow water, he saw a little crab sidling along as fast as his legs could carry him.

The Jackal was so hungry that when he saw this he poked his paw into the water to try and catch the crab, when snap ! the old Alligator caught hold of him.

" Oh dear !" thought the Jackal to himself, " what can I do ? This great big Alligator has caught my paw in his mouth, and in another minute he will drag me down by

it under the water and kill me. My only chance is to make him think he has made a mistake."

So he called out in a cheerful voice : " Clever Alligator, clever Alligator, to catch hold of a bulrush-root instead of my paw ! I hope you find it very tender."

The Alligator, who was so buried among the bulrushes that he could hardly see, thought, on hearing this : " Dear me, how tiresome ! I fancied I had caught hold of the Jackal's paw ; but there he is, calling out in a cheerful voice ; I suppose I must have seized a bulrush root instead, as he says." And he let the Jackal go.

The Jackal ran away as fast as he could, crying : " Oh, wise Alligator, wise Alligator. So you let me go again !"

Then the Alligator was very vexed, but the Jackal had run away too far to be caught.

Next day the Jackal returned to the riverside to get his dinner as before ; but because he was very much afraid of the Alligator, he called out : " Whenever I go to look for my dinner, I see the nice little crabs peeping up through the mud ; then I catch them and eat them. I wish I could see one now."

The Alligator, who was buried in the mud at the bottom of the river, heard every word. So he popped the little point of his snout above the water, thinking : " If I do but just show the tip of my nose, the Jackal will take me for a crab, and put in his paw to catch me, and as soon as ever he does I'll gobble him up."

But no sooner did the Jackal see the little tip of the Alligator's nose than he called out : " Aha, my friend, there you are. No dinner for me in this part of the river, then, I think."

And so saying, he ran further on, and fished for his dinner a long way from that place.

The Alligator was very angry at missing his prey a second time, and determined not to let him escape again. So on the following day, when his little tormentor returned to the waterside, the Alligator hid himself close to the bank in order to catch him if he could. Now the Jackal was rather afraid of going near the river, for he thought: "Perhaps this Alligator will catch me to-day." But yet, being hungry, he did not wish to go without his dinner, so to make all as safe as he could, he cried: "Where are all the little crabs gone? There is not one here, and I am so hungry, and generally, even when they are under water, one can see them going bubble, bubble, bubble! and all the little bubbles go pop! pop! pop!"

On hearing this the Alligator, who was buried in the mud under the river-bank, thought: "I will pretend to be a little crab." And he began to blow, "Puff, puff, puff! Bubble, bubble, bubble!" And all the great big bubbles rushed to the surface of the river and burst there, and the waters eddied round and round like a whirlpool, and there was such a commotion when the huge monster began to blow bubbles in this way that the Jackal saw very well who must be there, and ran away as fast as he could, saying: "Thank you, kind Alligator, thank you, thank you. Indeed, I would not have come here had I known you were so close."

This enraged the Alligator extremely; it made him quite cross to think of being so often deceived by a little Jackal, and he said to himself: "I will be taken in no more. Next time I will be very cunning."

So for a long time he waited and waited for the Jackal to return to the riverside. But the Jackal did not come, for he had thought to himself: "If matters go on in this way I shall some day be caught and eaten by the wicked

old Alligator. I had better content myself with living on wild figs." And he went no more near the river, but stayed in the jungle and ate wild figs, and roots which he dug out with his paws.

When the Alligator found this out he determined to try to catch the Jackal on land, so going under the largest of wild fig-trees, where the ground was covered with the fallen fruit, he collected a quantity of it together, and burying himself under the great heap, waited for the Jackal to appear. But no sooner did the cunning little animal see this great heap of wild figs all collected together than he thought: "That looks very like my friend the Alligator." And to discover if it was so or not he called out: "The juicy little figs that I love to eat always tumble down from the tree, and roll here and there as the wind drives them. But this great heap of figs is quite still; these cannot be good figs. I will not eat any of them."

"Ho, ho!" thought the Alligator; "is that all? How suspicious this Jackal is! I will make the figs roll about a little, and then, when he sees that, he will doubtless come and eat them."

So the great beast shook himself, and all the heap of little figs went roll, roll, roll; some a mile this way, some a mile that, farther than they had ever rolled before, or than the most blustering wind could have driven them!

Seeing this the Jackal scampered away, saying: "I am so much obliged to you, Alligator, for letting me know you were there, for indeed I should hardly have guessed it. You were so buried under that heap of figs."

The Alligator, hearing this, was so angry that he ran after the Jackal, but the latter ran very, very fast away, too quickly to be caught. Then the Alligator said to himself: "I will not allow that little wretch to make

"The great beast shook himself, and all the heap of little figs went roll, roll, roll."

fun of me another time, and then run away out of reach. I will show him that I can be more cunning than he fancies." And early the next morning he crawled as fast as he could to the Jackal's den, which was a hole in the side of a hill, and crept into it, and hid himself, waiting for the Jackal, who was out, to return home.

But when the Jackal got near the place, he looked about him, and thought : " Dear me, the ground looks as if some heavy creature had been walking over it, and here are great clods of earth knocked down from each side of the door of my den as if a very big animal had been trying to squeeze himself through it. I certainly will not go inside until I know that all is safe there."

So he called out : " Little house, pretty house, my sweet little house, why do you not give an answer when I call ? If I come, and all is safe and right, you always call out to me. Is anything wrong that you do not speak ?"

Then the Alligator, who was inside, thought : " If that is the case I had better call out, that he may fancy all is right in his house." And in as gentle a voice as he could, he said : " Sweet little Jackal."

At hearing these words the Jackal felt quite frightened, and thought to himself : " So the dreadful old Alligator is there ! I must try to kill him if I can, for if I do not he will certainly catch and kill me some day."

He therefore answered : " Thank you, my dear little house. I like to hear your pretty voice. I am coming in in a minute, but first I must collect firewood to cook my dinner." And he ran as fast as he could, and dragged all the dry branches and bits of stick he could find close up to the mouth of the den.

Meanwhile the Alligator inside kept as quiet as a mouse ; but he could not help laughing a little to himself, as he

thought : " So I have deceived this tiresome little Jackal at last. In a few minutes he will run in here, and then won't I snap him up !"

When the Jackal had gathered together all the sticks he could find, and put them round the mouth of his den, he set them on fire, and pushed them as far into it as possible. There was such a quantity of them that they soon blazed up into a great fire, and the smoke and flames filled the den, and smothered the wicked old Alligator, and burnt him to death, while the little Jackal ran up and down outside, dancing for joy, and singing : " How do you like my house, my friend ? Is it nice and warm ? Ding, dong ! Ding, dong ! The Alligator is dying ! Ding, dong ! Ding, dong ! He will trouble me no more. I have defeated my enemy ! Ring a ding ! Ding a ding ! Ding, ding, dong !"*

* From "Old Deccan Days, or Hindoo Fairy Stories," by Mary Frere. The preface by the Right Hon. Sir Bartle Frere, Bart. The illustrations by C. F. Frere. Fourth edition; John Murray, 1898. The story is here used by permission of Miss Frere.

CHICKEN-LICKEN.

AS Chicken-licken went one day to the wood, an acorn fell upon her poor bald pate, and she thought the sky had fallen. So she said she would go and tell the King that the sky had fallen. So Chicken-licken turned back, and walked, and walked, and walked, till she met Henny-penny.

And Chicken-licken said: "Well, Henny-penny, good-morning! Where are you going?"

"I'm going to the wood for some meat," said Henny-penny.

"Oh, Henny-penny, don't go to the wood," said Chicken-licken, "for I was going, and the sky fell upon my poor bald pate, and I'm going to tell the King."

So Henny-penny turned back with Chicken-licken, and they walked, and they walked, and they walked, till they met with Cocky-locky.

"Oh, Cocky-locky, where are you going?" asked Chicken-licken.

And Cocky-locky answered: "I'm going to the wood for some meat."

Then Henny-penny answered: "Oh, Cocky-locky, don't go, for I was going, and I met Chicken-licken, and Chicken-licken had been at the wood, and the sky had fallen on her poor bald pate, and we are going to tell the King."

So Cocky-locky turned back, and they all walked, and they walked, and they walked, until they fell in with Ducky-daddles.

"Well, Ducky-daddles, where are you going?"

And Ducky-daddles said: "I'm going to the wood for some meat."

Then Cocky-locky said: "Oh, Ducky-daddles, don't go, for I was going, and I met Henny-penny and Henny-penny met Chicken-licken, and Chicken-licken had been at the wood, and the sky had fallen on her poor bald pate, and we are going to tell the King."

So Ducky-daddles turned back; and they all walked, and they walked, and they walked, till they fell in with Drake-lake.

"Drake-lake, where are you going?"

"I'm going to the wood for some meat," answered Drake-lake.

"Oh, Drake-lake," said Ducky-daddles, "don't go to the wood, for I was going, and I met Cocky-locky, and Cocky-locky met Henny-penny, and Henny-penny met Chicken-licken, and Chicken-licken had been at the wood, and the sky had fallen on her poor bald pate, and we are going to tell the King."

So Drake-lake turned back; and they all walked, and they walked, and they walked, till they fell in with a goose.

"Fox-lox said, 'Come along with me, and I will show you the way.'"

"Goosie-poosie, where are you going?"

"I'm going to the wood for some meat," answered Goosie-poosie.

"Oh, Goosie-poosie," said Drake-lake, "don't go to the wood. I was going, and I met Ducky-daddles, and Ducky-daddles met Cocky-locky, and Cocky-locky met Henny-penny, and Henny-penny met Chicken-licken, and Chicken-licken had been at the wood, and the sky had fallen on her poor bald pate, and we are going to tell the King."

So Goosie-poosie turned back; and they all walked, and they walked, and they walked, till they met Gander-lander.

"Where are you going, Gander-lander?"

"I'm going to the wood for some meat."

"Oh, Gander-lander," said Goosie-poosie, "don't go to the wood. I was going, and I met Drake-lake, and Drake-lake met Ducky-daddles, and Ducky-daddles met Cocky-locky, and Cocky-locky met Henny-penny, and Henny-penny met Chicken-licken, and Chicken-licken had been at the wood, and the sky had fallen on her poor bald pate, and we are going to tell the King."

So Gander-lander turned back; and they all walked, and they walked, and they walked, till they fell in with Turkey-lurkey.

"Well, Turkey-lurkey, good-day to you! Where are you going?"

"I'm going to the wood for some meat," said Turkey-lurkey.

"Oh, Turkey-lurkey," said Gander-lander, "don't go to the wood. I was going, and I met Goosie-poosie, and Goosie-poosie met Drake-lake, and Drake-lake met Ducky-daddles, and Ducky-daddles met Cocky-locky,

and Cocky-locky met Henny-penny, and Henny-penny met Chicken-licken, and Chicken-licken had been at the wood, and the sky had fallen on her poor bald pate, and we are going to tell the King."

"I'll go with you," said Turkey-lurkey.

So Turkey-lurkey turned back, and walked with Gander-lander, Goosie-poosie, Drake-lake, Ducky-daddles, Cocky-locky, Henny-penny, and Chicken-licken. And as they were going along they met Fox-lox; and Fox-lox said: "Where are you going to, my pretty maids?"

And they said: "Chicken-licken went to the wood, and the sky fell on her poor bald pate, and we are going to tell the King."

And Fox-lox said: "Come along with me, and I will show you the way."

But Fox-lox took them into the Fox's hole, and he and his young ones soon ate up poor Chicken-licken, Henny-penny, Cocky-locky, Ducky-daddles, Drake-lake, Goosie-poosie, Gander-lander, and Turkey-lurkey, and they never saw the King to tell him that the sky had fallen.

THE WOLF AND THE SEVEN GOSLINGS.

THERE was once an old Goose who had seven young Goslings, and loved them as dearly as ever mother loved her children.

One day she had to go into the wood to seek for food for them, and before setting off she called all seven round her, and said: "Dear children, I am obliged to go into the wood. While I am gone, be on your guard against the Wolf, for if he gets in here he will eat you up, feathers, skin, bone, and all. The villain often disguises himself, but you can easily know him by his hoarse voice and black paws."

"Dear mother," answered the Goslings, "we will take great care; you may go without any anxiety." So the old Goose bade them good-bye, and set off cheerfully for the wood.

Before long, someone knocked at the door, and cried: "Open, open, my dear children; your mother is here, and has brought something for each of you."

But the Goslings soon perceived, by the hoarse voice, that it was the Wolf. "We will not open," said they. "You are not our mother, for she has a sweet and lovely voice; but your voice is hoarse—you are the Wolf!"

Thereupon the Wolf set off to a merchant, and bought a large lump of chalk. He ate it, and it made his voice soft. Back he came, knocked at the door, and cried: "Open, open, my dear children; your mother is here, and has brought something for each of you."

But the Wolf had laid his black paw on the window-sill, and when the children saw it, they cried: "We will not open. Our mother has not black feet like you—you are the Wolf."

So the Wolf ran off to the baker, and said: "I have hurt my foot; put some dough on it."

And when the baker had plastered it with dough, the Wolf went to the miller, and cried: "Strew some meal on my paws." But the miller thought to himself, "The Wolf wants to deceive someone," and he hesitated to do it.

"If you don't do it at once," the Wolf said, "I will eat you up." So the miller was afraid, and made his paws white.

Now came the rogue back for the third time, knocked, and said: "Open the door, dear children; your mother has come home, and has brought something for each of you out of the wood."

The little Goslings cried: "First show us your paws, that we may see whether you are really our mother." So he laid his paws on the window-sill, and when the Goslings saw that they were white, they believed it was all right, and opened the door; and who should come in but the Wolf?

"One after another the Wolf gobbled them up."

They were terrified, and tried to hide themselves. One jumped under the table, another into the bed, the third into the oven ; the fourth ran into the kitchen, the fifth hopped into a cupboard, the sixth under the wash-tub, and the youngest got into the clock-case. But the Wolf seized them all, and stood on no ceremony with them. One after another he gobbled them all up, except the youngest, whom he could not find. When the Wolf had eaten his fill, he strolled forth, laid himself down in a green meadow under a tree, and went fast asleep.

Not long after, back came the old Goose home from the wood ; but alas ! what did she see ? The house-door stood wide open ; table, chairs, benches, were all overthrown ; the wash-tub lay in the ashes ; blankets and pillows were torn off the bed. She looked for her children, but nowhere could she find them. She called them each by name, but nobody answered. At last a little squeaking voice answered : " Here am I, dear mother, in the clock-case."

She pulled him out, and he told her how the Wolf had come and had eaten up all the others. You may think how she wept for her dear children.

At last, in her grief, she wandered out, and the youngest Gosling ran beside her. And when she came to the meadow, there lay the Wolf under the tree, snoring till the boughs shook. She walked round and examined him on all sides, till she perceived that something was moving and kicking about inside him.

" Can it be," thought she, " that my poor children whom he has swallowed for his supper are yet alive ?" So she sent the little Gosling back to the house for scissors, needle, and thread, and began to slit up the monster's body.

Scarcely had she given one snip, when out came the head of a Gosling, and when she had cut another snip, out came a second ; and when she had cut a third snip, all the six jumped out one after another, alive, well, and unhurt, because the greedy monster had swallowed them whole. They embraced their mother tenderly, and skipped about as lively as a tailor at a wedding.

But the old Goose said : " Now go and find me six large stones, which we will put inside the greedy beast while he is still asleep."

So the Goslings got the stones in all haste, and they put them inside the Wolf ; and the old Goose sewed him up again in a great hurry, while he never once moved nor took any notice.

When the Wolf at last woke up and got upon his legs, he found he was very thirsty, and wished to go to the brook to drink. But as soon as he began to move the stones began to shake and rattle inside him, till he cried : " What's this rattling inside me ? I thought I had eaten six little geese, but they are only stones."

When he came to the spring and bent down his head to drink, the heavy stones overbalanced him, and in he went, head over heels. And when the seven Goslings saw this, they came running up, crying loudly, " The Wolf is dead, the Wolf is dead !" and danced for joy all round the spring, and their mother with them.

THERE was once a Mouse called Greybeard, who struck up a warm friendship with a Cat whose name was Slyboots. These two were always meeting and having long talks together, and their friendship became more cordial every day.

One morning they were sitting on a wall together, after sharing some cheese which Greybeard had taken from a pantry near by. It was a fine warm day, and Slyboots was feeling very comfortable, having made a good meal, and then washed herself with her tongue, and dried her fur in the bright sunlight.

"Greybeard," said she, "this is very pleasant, and you are a very sensible and useful friend. You creep where I cannot go, while I can carry larger pieces in my mouth; thus we are of service to one another. What do you say to our setting up house together?"

"With all my heart," replied the Mouse, much flattered. "You shall be master and I will be servant."

"Nonsense!" cried Slyboots. "We will share and share alike in everything. I will consent to our joining forces on no other conditions."

"Very well, Slyboots," said Greybeard, with pride and delight; "let it be so."

So they went off together, and chose a cosy dwelling-place, and were soon comfortably settled in their new home.

"Now, Greybeard," said the Cat, "we must begin to lay up stores for the winter. It will never do if the cold weather comes and finds us unprovided. If that happens, I dare say you will become too venturesome, and get caught in a trap, and that would be a great sorrow to me."

"How kind you are, Slyboots!" said the little Mouse gratefully. "You always think of others before yourself. I think, however, I can really be of use to you, for I happen to know where there is a great jar of fat stored away in a cook's larder. It is too big for me to carry, but I can creep in and nibble the string of the latch until the door flies open. Then you must go in and fetch the jar, and we will hide it in some secret place until we are in need."

"Excellent!" cried the Cat. "Let us be off!"

So they went off, and all came to pass as the Mouse suggested. Greybeard opened the door for Slyboots, who carried off the jar as easily as possible. The question then arose as to where they should hide it. First they thought of one place and then of another, but at last they decided on a hole in the church tower, and there the jar was put in safety.

No sooner was the fat hidden away than Slyboots began to long for a taste of it; but Greybeard was so attached to her that he could not be shaken off. Whenever Slyboots went out, Greybeard wanted to run after her, and the Cat was greatly puzzled to know how she

could get to the storehole unseen. Then one day she thought of a capital plan.

"Greybeard," said she, "I have just had a letter from my cousin the House Cat. She has a dear little son, white all over, with a few charming brown spots here and there. He must be a lovely child. My cousin asks me to be godmother, and I am eager to go and see them. Do you think you can spare me to go to-day? And will you remain here and take care of the house in my absence?"

"Why, of course, dear Slyboots!" cried Greybeard readily. "I am sure it is a lovely child. You must certainly go. I shall think of you at the feast, and am glad you will have a pleasant day."

Greybeard little dreamed that his friend's tale was false, and that she had not been asked to be godmother to any little cousin's child. He sat contentedly at home, while the Cat ran off straight to the church tower. Into the hole she crept, licking her lips as she thought of the good fat. Very soon she had opened the jar and feasted merrily on the rich food it held, until she had licked all the top off. Then she came out, and, having washed herself thoroughly to remove all signs of greasiness from her fur, she lay in the sun and slept soundly for some hours. When the evening came with cool breezes, she waked up, and stretched herself, and returned home.

Little Greybeard was watching at the door, and greeted her with delight.

"Well, here you are!" cried he. "You have been a long while away. Have you had a good time?"

"Very pleasant indeed," said Slyboots, thinking of the jar of fat.

"And what is the baby called?" asked the Mouse.

"The baby's name?" answered Slyboots. "Oh, to

be sure, they gave him a very pretty name. They called him Top-off."

"Top-off!" cried Greybeard. "What a very funny name! Is it a family name?"

"Funny, indeed!" answered Slyboots, with an offended air. "I don't think it is any funnier than Steal-crumb, your grandmother's name."

"Indeed, dear Slyboots," said Greybeard humbly, "I only meant it was an unusual name. Now that I consider it, I find it very pretty and suitable."

"Yes, it *is* very suitable," said Slyboots, with a shrewd glance. "Let us say good-night. I am quite tired out."

A few days later the Cat had a fresh longing to taste the fat, and suggested again to the Mouse that he should keep house while she went to a christening.

"All my cousins seem to want me as godmother to their babies," said she, bridling. "This one is such a darling, I hear, and has a white ring round her neck. I can hardly refuse, can I?"

"Why, of course not!" said Greybeard; and he sat at home and thought it no wonder that all the Cat's cousins should love her so dearly.

Meanwhile Slyboots ran off to the church tower, and feasted on the fat until it was half gone.

"What fun this is!" thought she. "If Greybeard were with me I should not enjoy it half so much!"

She washed herself and slept in the sun as before, and in the cool of the evening returned home.

"Welcome, Slyboots!" cried the Mouse, when she came in. "Have you had a nice day?"

"Quite delightful, indeed," answered the Cat.

"And what is the baby's name?"

"Half-gone," answered Slyboots. "Is it not a charming name?"

"It is a very strange and distinctive name, certainly," said Greybeard. "I never heard it before in my life."

"Well, you have heard it now," replied the Cat briefly, and straightway she curled herself up in the warmest corner and went to sleep.

It was not long before the Cat felt she must taste the fat again.

"Greybeard," she said, "they say all good things come in threes. I hear a third little cousin is born, and I am asked to be godmother again! Such a beautiful child it must be! It is black all over except for its paws and the tip of its tail—a thing one rarely sees! I really must ask you to excuse me again to-day."

"Of course," answered the Mouse. "I hope it will be a nice party. I wonder what they will call the child. The others had such curious names—Top-off and Half-gone. I often wonder what they mean."

"You silly little thing!" said Slyboots. "There you sit, with your grey coat and long tail, like a snail in his home! It is no wonder you get fancies into your head when you never go out."

Away went the Cat to the church tower, and finished the fat at one meal.

"Ah, how good it was!" she sighed, as she licked her lips. "And now it is all gone. Well, pleasures cannot last for ever."

She licked herself clean, and lay down for a rest before going home. When she returned at last, the Mouse was watching for her, and came to meet her with great joy.

"Well, Slyboots," said he, "what sort of a day have you had?"

"Oh, very pleasant," replied Slyboots.

"And what have they called the baby?"

"The baby? Oh, they called him All-gone."

"Well, upon my word!" cried the astonished Mouse. "The names of your cousins get stranger and stranger! I thought Top-off was odd, and Half-gone very singular, but All-gone is more surprising than either of them!"

"The jar was perfectly empty!"

"Oh, you think so, do you?" replied the Cat huffily. "Let me tell you that they are all very excellent names, and fit their owners as no others could."

"Oh, certainly, dear Slyboots," answered the Mouse eagerly. "I know so few names that anything new or strange seems doubly odd to me. I am sure they suit the children perfectly."

"Well, then," said Slyboots, "let me go to sleep.

If you are not tired after sitting still all day, *I* am, after all I have done."

For a few weeks all went happily. Then the cold weather came, and, food being scarce, the Cat and Mouse grew hungry.

"Let us go and have some of our fat," suggested Greybeard one day.

"No, not yet awhile," said the Cat hurriedly. "Wait until we feel to need it more."

So they waited; but at last the Mouse determined to have a meal, and set off, telling the Cat he was starving, and must have a taste out of their larder. The Cat followed, feeling rather foolish, and wondering what Greybeard would say when he found the jar empty.

Soon they came to the church tower, and the Mouse ran to the hole to open the jar. Lo and behold! it was perfectly empty! He turned in horror to his friend, beginning to cry out that the food was stolen, when he saw the Cat's guilty expression, and the truth flashed upon his simple mind.

"Oh, Slyboots, Slyboots!" he cried sadly. "Now I see it all. Top-off—Half-gone—All-gone! No wonder the children had strange names! How could you deceive me so unkindly? You are a false friend, and I will have no more to do with you."

"But I have something more to do with you," replied the Cat angrily, as she leaped upon the Mouse and swallowed him whole.

So that is how the friendship of Slyboots the Cat and Greybeard the Mouse came to a sad end.

Adapted from the Brothers Grimm by E. L. Darton.

THE THREE LITTLE PIGS

ONCE upon a time three little Pigs, not very old nor very wise, were left alone in the world by reason of the death of their mother, who was taken from them by a greedy butcher. The little Pigs did not always agree so well together as was right, and it was not long before they decided to set up housekeeping independently, instead of sharing the home where they had been brought up. Each thought he knew best how to build himself a house, and how to look after himself. So they parted, and set off in different ways to seek their fortune.

The first little Pig had not gone far before he met a Man with a bundle of straw.

"Please, Man, give me that straw to build a house," said he.

The Man gave him the straw, and the little Pig built a house with it. Presently a Wolf came along, and

"'Please, Man, give me that straw to build a house.'"

knocked at the door, and said: "Little Pig, little Pig, let me come in."

But the little Pig knew it was the Wolf, and answered: "No, no, by the hair of my chinny chin chin!"

"What!" said the Wolf. "Then I'll huff, and I'll puff, and I'll blow your house in."

So he huffed, and he puffed, and he blew the house in, and ate up the first little Pig.

The second little Pig met a Man with a bundle of furze, and said: "Please, Man, give me that furze to build a house."

The Man gave him the furze, and the little Pig built his house. Then along came the Wolf, and knocked at the door, and said: "Little Pig, little Pig, let me come in."

But the little Pig knew him, and answered: "No, no, by the hair of my chinny chin chin."

"Then I'll huff, and I'll puff, and I'll blow your house in."

So he huffed, and he puffed, and he puffed, and he huffed, and he blew the house in, and ate up the second little Pig.

The third little Pig met a Man with a load of bricks, and said: "Please, Man, give me those bricks to build a house with."

The Man gave him the bricks, and he built his house with them. Presently the Wolf came, as he did to the other little Pigs, and said: "Little Pig, little Pig, let me come in."

"No, no, by the hair of my chinny chin chin."

"Then I'll huff, and I'll puff, and I'll blow your house in."

Well, he huffed and he puffed, and he huffed and he

puffed, and he puffed and huffed; but he could *not* blow the house in. When he found that he could not, with all his huffing and puffing, blow the house in, he said: "Little Pig, I know where there is a nice field of turnips."

"Where?" said the little Pig.

"Oh, in Farmer Smith's field, and if you will be ready to-morrow morning early, I will call for you, and we will go together, and get some for dinner."

"Very well," said the little Pig; "I will be ready. What time do you mean to go?"

"Oh, at six o'clock."

Well, the little Pig got up at five, and got the turnips before the Wolf came, which he did about six.

"Little Pig, are you ready?" said the Wolf when he arrived.

"Ready!" said the little Pig. "I have been and come back again, and got a nice potful for dinner."

The Wolf felt very angry at this, but thought that he would be even with the little Pig somehow or other, so he said: "Little Pig, I know where there is a nice apple-tree."

"Where?" said the Pig.

"Down at the orchard near the village," replied the Wolf; "and if you will not deceive me, I will come for you at five o'clock to-morrow and get some apples."

Well, the little Pig bustled up the next morning at four o'clock, and went off for the apples, hoping to get back before the Wolf came; but he had farther to go than the day before, and had to climb the tree, so that just as he was coming down from it, he saw the Wolf coming, which frightened him very much. When the Wolf came up, he said: "Little Pig, what! are you here before me? Are they nice apples?"

" 'Little Pig, are they nice apples?' "

"Yes, very," said the little Pig. "I will throw you down one."

He threw one down, and threw it so far that, while the Wolf was gone to pick it up, the little Pig climbed down quickly and ran home and shut himself in.

The next day the Wolf came again, and said to the little Pig: "Little Pig, there is a fair in the village this afternoon. Will you go?"

"Yes," said the little Pig, "I will go; what time will you be ready?"

"At three," said the Wolf.

But the little Pig went off before the time again, and got to the fair, and bought a butter-churn, which he was going home with when he saw the Wolf coming. Then he could not tell what to do. So he got into the churn to hide, and by so doing turned it round; and it rolled down the hill with the Pig in it, making such a strange noise that it frightened the Wolf so much that he ran home without going to the fair. He went to the little Pig's house, and told him how frightened he had been by a great round thing which came down the hill past him.

Then the little Pig said: "Hah! I frightened you, then. I had been to the fair and bought a butter-churn, and when I saw you, I got into it, and rolled down the hill."

Then the Wolf was very angry indeed, and declared he *would* eat up the little Pig, and that he would come down the chimney after him. When the little Pig saw what he was about, he hung the pot full of water over the fire, because it was baking day, and made up a blazing fire; and just as the Wolf was coming down, took off the cover, and in fell the Wolf. So the little Pig put on the cover again in an instant, boiled him up, and ate him for supper, and lived happy ever afterwards.

SINGH RAJAH AND THE CUNNING LITTLE JACKALS

ONCE upon a time, in a great jungle, there lived a great Lion. He was Rajah of all the country round; and every day he used to leave his den, in the deepest shadow of the rocks, and roar with a loud, angry voice; and when he roared, the other animals in the jungle, who were all his subjects, got very much frightened, and ran here and there; and Singh Rajah, the Lion King, would pounce upon them and kill them, and gobble them up for his dinner.

This went on for a long, long time, until at last there were no living creatures left in the jungle but two little Jackals—a Rajah Jackal and a Ranee Jackal, husband and wife.

A very hard time of it the poor little Jackals had, running this way and that to escape the terrible Singh Rajah; and every day the little Ranee Jackal would say

"Singh Rajah sprang down to kill the other Lion."

to her husband: "I am afraid he will catch us to-day. Do you hear how he is roaring? Oh dear! oh dear!"

And he would answer her: "Never fear; I will take care of you. Let us run a mile or two. Come, come—quick, quick, quick!"

And they would both run away as fast as they could.

After some time spent in this way, they found, however, one fine day, that the Lion was so close upon them that they could not escape. Then the little Ranee Jackal said: "Husband, husband, I feel very frightened! The Singh Rajah is so angry, he will certainly kill us at once. What can we do?"

But he answered: "Cheer up; we can save ourselves yet. Come, and I'll show you how we may manage it."

So what did these cunning little Jackals do, but they went to the great Lion's den; and when he saw them coming, he began to roar and shake his mane, and he said: "You little wretches, come and be eaten at once! I have had no dinner for three whole days, and all that time I have been running over hill and dale to find you. Ro-a-ar! Ro-a-ar! Come and be eaten, I say!" and he lashed his tail and gnashed his teeth, and looked very terrible indeed.

Then the Jackal Rajah, creeping quite close up to him, said: "O great Singh Rajah, we all know you are our master, and we would have come at your bidding long ago; but indeed, sir, there is a much bigger Rajah even than you in this jungle, and he tried to catch hold of us and eat us up, and frightened us so much that we were obliged to run away."

"What do you mean?" growled Singh Rajah. "There is no King in this jungle but me!"

"Ah, Sire," answered the Jackal, "in truth, one would

think so, for you are very dreadful. Your very voice is death. But it is as we say, for we, with our own eyes, have seen one with whom you could not compete; whose equal you can no more be than we are yours; whose face is as the flaming fire, his step as thunder, and his power supreme."

"It is impossible!" interrupted the old Lion. "But show me this Rajah of whom you speak so much, that I may destroy him instantly!"

Then the little Jackals ran on before him until they reached a great well, and, pointing down to his own reflection in the water, they said: "See, Sire, there lives the terrible King of whom we spoke."

When Singh Rajah looked down the well, he became very angry, for he thought he saw another Lion there. He roared and shook his great mane, and the shadow Lion shook his, and looked terribly defiant. At last, beside himself with rage at the insolence of his opponent, Singh Rajah sprang down to kill him at once, but no other Lion was there—only the treacherous reflection; and the sides of the well were so steep that he could not get out again to punish the two Jackals, who peeped over the top. After struggling for some time in the deep water, he sank to rise no more. And the little Jackals threw stones down upon him from above, and danced round and round the well, singing: "Ao! Ao! Ao! Ao! The King of the Forest is dead, is dead! We have killed the great Lion who would have killed us! Ao! Ao! Ao! Ao! Ring-a-ting — ding-a-ting! Ring-a-ting — ding-a-ting! Ao! Ao! Ao!"*

* From "Old Deccan Days; or, Hindoo Fairy Stories," by Mary Frere. The Preface by the Right Hon. Sir Bartle Frere, Bart.; the illustrations by C. F. Frere. Fourth Edition: John Murray, 1898. The story is here used by permission of Miss Frere.

THE WHITE PET

THERE was in the old days a Farmer who had a fine Sheep, and he called it his White Pet. Now, he was not very rich, and one year when Christmas came round, he found that he must kill the Sheep to sell the meat and win some money. But the White Pet heard of this, and was by no means anxious to be killed. So he took it into his head to run away to seek his fortunes elsewhere.

He had not gone very far when a Bull met him.

"Good-morning, White Pet. Where are you going?" asked the Bull in his deep voice.

"Good-morning, Bull," answered the White Pet. "I am going to seek my fortune. They were meaning to kill me for Christmas, and I thought I had better run away."

"Do you say so?" said the Bull. "I will go with you, for they were going to do the very same with me."

"I am willing," answered the White Pet. "The larger the party, the better the fun."

So they marched along together. Presently they fell in with a Dog.

"Good-morning, White Pet," said the Dog. "Good-morning, Bull."

"Good-morning, Dog," said the White Pet; and "Good-morning, Dog," said the Bull.

"Where are you going, White Pet and Bull?" asked the Dog.

"We are running away," said the White Pet, "for we heard that they were going to kill us at Christmas."

"They were going to do the very same to me," said the Dog. "I will go along with you, if you agree."

"Come, then," said the White Pet.

So on they marched—White Pet, Bull, and Dog. Presently a Cat met them.

"Good-day, White Pet," said the Cat. "Good-day, Bull and Dog."

"Good-day, Cat," answered the White Pet; and "Good-day," answered the Bull and the Dog.

"Where are you going?" said the Cat.

"I am going to seek my fortune," replied the White Pet, "because they were meaning to kill me at Christmas."

"They were meaning to kill me, too," said the Cat, "and I had better go along with you."

"Come on, then," said the White Pet, "and welcome."

Then they journeyed till a Cock met them.

"Good-day, White Pet," says the Cock.

"Good-day to you, Cock," answered the White Pet; and "Good-day to you, Cock," answered the others.

"Where are you going?" asked the Cock.

"I am going to seek my fortune, with Bull, Dog, and Cat, because we were to be killed at Christmas," answered the White Pet.

"They were going to kill me at the very same time," said the Cock. "I will go along with you."

"Come, then, and gladly," said the White Pet.

So they all marched on—White Pet, Bull, Dog, Cat, and Cock—till they fell in with a Goose.

"Good-afternoon, White Pet," said the Goose.

"Good-afternoon to you, Goose," answered the White Pet; and "Good-afternoon to you, Goose," said the rest.

"Where are you going, White Pet?" said the Goose.

"We are running away because they were going to kill us all at Christmas," said the White Pet.

"They were going to do that to me, too," said the Goose, "and I will go with you."

So they all marched along together till night was drawing on them, and it began to grow dark. They saw a little light before them far away; but though it was far away, they were not long in getting there, and they found it came from a great house.

When they reached the house they said to each other that they would look in at a window to see who was in the house. And they looked in, and there they saw thieves counting money which they had stolen.

"This is evil," said the White Pet. "Now, let every one of us call his own call in his own true voice. I will call my own call; and let the Bull call his own call; let the Dog call his own call; let the Cat call her own call; and the Cock his own call, and the Goose his own call."

With that they gave a great shout altogether: One—two—three—"GAIRE!"

When the thieves heard that great noise outside the house they thought the mischief was there, and fled in haste, and went to a wood that was not far off.

As soon as the White Pet and his company saw that the house was empty, they went in and got the money that the thieves had been counting, and divided it among

themselves; and then they thought that they would settle to rest for the night.

"Where will you sleep to-night, Bull?" asked the White Pet.

"I will sleep behind the door," said the Bull, "as was my wont in my home. Where will you sleep yourself, White Pet?"

"I will sleep in the middle of the floor, as was my wont," said the White Pet. "Where will you sleep, Dog?"

"I will sleep beside the fire, as was my wont," said the Dog.

"Where will you sleep, Cat?" asked the White Pet.

"I will sleep in the candle cupboard, as was my wont, White Pet," said the Cat.

"Where will you sleep, Cock?" asked the White Pet.

"I will sleep on the rafters, White Pet," answered the Cock, "as was my wont."

"Where will you sleep, Goose?" said the White Pet.

"I will sleep on the rubbish-heap, White Pet, where I was accustomed to be," answered the Goose.

So they all went to sleep in their accustomed places.

They had not long settled to rest when one of the thieves, bolder than his fellows, returned to look in to see if he could perceive whether anyone at all was in the house. Everything was quiet, and he came boldly in to the candle cupboard to look for a candle, that he might kindle it and make a light. But when he put his hand into the candle-box, the Cat thrust her claws into his hand. None the less, he took a candle, and struck a spark with his tinder-box, and lighted the candle. Then the Dog got up and stretched himself; and he stuck his tail into a pot of water that stood beside the fire, and shook it, and put out the candle.

"The thief thought the mischief was in the house."

At that the thief thought the mischief was in the house, and fled. But as he passed the White Pet in the middle of the floor the sheep woke up and butted him; and before he got past the Bull, he received a kick from him; and the Cock, waking up, began to crow loudly; and as he went out at the door, past the rubbish-heap, the Goose waddled up at him, and began to belabour him with his wings and beak about the shanks.

He went to the wood where his comrades were as fast as his legs would carry him. They asked him how it had gone with him.

"It went," said he, "but middling well. When I got to the candle cupboard, there was a man in it who thrust ten sharp knives into my hand at once. But I took a candle, none the less, and went to the fireside to strike a light; but there was a big black man lying there, who sprinkled water on the candle and put it out. When I tried to run away, there was a big man in the middle of the floor, who got up and gave me a great shove; and another man stood behind the door, who kicked me and pushed me out. There was a little brat up in the rafters, who saw me, and kept calling out: 'Cuir-a-nees-an-show-ay-s-foni-mi-hayn-da' ('Send him up here, and I'll do for him'); and outside, on the rubbish-heap, there was a great cobbler who came and belaboured me about the shanks with his apron."

When the thieves heard that, they had no mind to return and look for the money they had left behind; and so the White Pet and his comrades had it all to themselves, and it kept them in peace and happiness as long as they lived.

Adapted from J. F. Campbell's
"Popular Tales of the West Highlands."

The Cat and the Mouse
Played in the malt-house:

THE Cat bit the Mouse's tail off.

"Pray, Puss, give me my tail."

"No," says the Cat; "I'll not give you your tail till you go to the Cow and fetch me some milk."

First she leapt, and then she ran,
Till she came to the Cow, and thus began:

"Pray, Cow, give me milk, that I may give Cat milk, that Cat may give me my tail again!"

"No," said the Cow; "I will give you no milk till you go to the Farmer and get me some hay."

First she leapt, and then she ran,
Till she came to the Farmer, and thus began:

"Pray, Farmer, give me hay, that I may give Cow hay, that Cow may give me milk, that I may give Cat milk, that Cat may give me my tail again!"

"'*Pray, Baker, give me bread.*'"

"No," says the Farmer; "I'll give you no hay till you go to the Butcher and fetch me some meat."

First she leapt, and then she ran,
Till she came to the Butcher, and thus began:

"Pray, Butcher, give me meat, that I may give Farmer meat, that Farmer may give me hay, that I may give Cow hay, that Cow may give me milk, that I may give Cat milk, that Cat may give me my tail again!"

"No," says the Butcher; "I'll give you no meat till you go to the Baker and fetch me some bread."

First she leapt, and then she ran,
Till she came to the Baker, and thus began:

"Pray, Baker, give me bread, that I may give Butcher bread, that Butcher may give me meat, that I may give Farmer meat, that Farmer may give me hay, that I may give Cow hay, that Cow may give me milk, that I may give Cat milk, that Cat may give me my tail again!"

"Yes," says the Baker, "I'll give you some bread,
But if you eat my meal, I'll cut off your head."

Then the Baker gave Mouse bread, and Mouse gave Butcher bread, and Butcher gave Mouse meat, and Mouse gave Farmer meat, and Farmer gave Mouse hay, and Mouse gave Cow hay, and Cow gave Mouse milk, and Mouse gave Cat milk, and Cat gave Mouse her tail again!

THE RABBITS BRIDE

THERE was once a girl who lived with her mother in a house in a cabbage-garden, where grew the finest cabbages in the country. But every day a Rabbit used to come in and eat a cabbage, and this went on until the woman lost patience, and said to her daughter :

" Go and drive the Rabbit out of the garden."

So the girl went out and said to the Rabbit, " Shoo ! shoo !"

" I will go if you will come with me," answered the Rabbit. " Sit on my back, and I will carry you to my rabbit-hutch !"

But the girl drove him away. Next day the same thing happened : the Rabbit ate the cabbages, and the mother sent her daughter out to drive him away.

" Shoo ! shoo !" said the girl ; and the Rabbit said : " Sit on my back, and come to my rabbit-hutch, and I will go gladly."

But the girl chased him out of the garden again.

"The Rabbit began to lead her to the tree."

This happened once more on the following day. The mother looked out of the window, and saw the Rabbit nibbling at the cabbages.

"Go, daughter," said she, "and turn the Rabbit out of the garden, before he eats up all the cabbages."

Out ran the girl in a great hurry.

"Shoo! shoo!" cried she, waving her arms.

"I will go with pleasure if you will come too," replied the Rabbit. "I am so lonely in my hutch. Come and be my bride."

This time the girl had pity on the Rabbit, and, instead of chasing him away, she sat upon his back and allowed him to carry her off.

Presently they arrived at the hutch, which was a poor place to live in for anyone but a Rabbit, and the girl began to feel frightened and unhappy.

"Is this to be our home?" she asked.

"Why, of course," answered the Rabbit rather crossly. "What is good enough for one is good enough for another. I am very content, and so will you be when you have settled down and given up being fanciful. Now," he went on, "you must set to work and get everything ready for the wedding-feast. I like things done thoroughly well; there is plenty of bran and some cabbages. Meanwhile I will go out and invite the guests."

Away went the Rabbit, and when he was gone the girl sat down and wept sorely, and thought of her home in the cabbage-garden, and of the hard life in store for her in the rabbit-hutch.

Presently the Rabbit returned, bringing the wedding-guests with him. These were other Rabbits, and a number of Hares, and a Fox to be parson, and a Crow to be clerk. They waited under a tree a little way from the hutch.

When the girl saw them she wept afresh, for it was very strange and uncomfortable.

"Come along, my bride," cried the Rabbit; "everybody is waiting." And he took her hand, and began to lead her to the tree. But the poor bride wept so much that the Rabbit left her to herself for a while, telling her to dry her eyes and follow him when she was ready.

No sooner was the girl alone than she went back to the hutch and laid her plans to escape. She rolled up some straw in the shape of a figure, and dressed it in her own cloak, and gave it eyes, and a fine nose, and a red mouth, and set it up as if it was sitting by the table where the wedding-feast was spread. Then she slipped away to her home by the back-door.

By-and-by came the Rabbit to call his bride again.

"Come along, slow-coach," he said, and gave the figure a push. Down it went with a bang, and the Rabbit thought he had killed his bride, and ran out lamenting.

"There will be no wedding," said he: "my bride has cried herself to death."

"That is a pity," said the guests; "but we will help you to eat up the feast." So they all sat down, and were so cheerful that the Rabbit was very soon consoled for the loss of his bride.

Adapted from the Brothers Grimm by E. L. Darton

THE THREE JUMPERS

A GRASSHOPPER, a Flea, and a Frog once wanted to see which could jump the highest, and they invited the whole world to see the festival. Three famous jumpers were they, as everyone will say, when they all met together in the room.

"I will give my daughter to him who jumps the highest," said the King; "for it's not amusing, where there is no prize to jump for."

The Flea stepped forward first. He had exquisite manners, and bowed to the company on all sides; for he had noble blood, and was, moreover, accustomed to the society of man alone, and that makes a great difference.

Then came the Grasshopper. He was considerably heavier, but he was well-mannered, and wore a green uniform, which he had by right of birth. He said, moreover, that he belonged to a very ancient Egyptian family, and that in the house where he then was he was thought much of. The fact was, he had been just brought out of the fields, and put in a pasteboard house, three stories high, all made of Court playing-cards, with the coloured

side inwards, and doors and windows cut out of the body of the queen of hearts.

"I sing so well," said he, "that sixteen native Grasshoppers, who have chirped from infancy, and yet got no house built of cards to live in, grew thinner than they were before for sheer vexation when they heard me."

It was thus that the Flea and the Grasshopper gave an account of themselves, and thought that they were good enough to marry a Princess.

The Frog said nothing, but people gave it as their opinion that he therefore thought the more; and when the House-dog had snuffed at him with his nose, he admitted the Frog was of good family. An old Councillor, who had had three orders given him to make him hold his tongue, asserted that the Frog was a prophet; for one could see on his back if there would be a severe or mild winter, and that was what one could not see even on the back of the man who writes the almanac.

"I say nothing about that, it is true," exclaimed the King; "but I have my own opinion about the jumpers, notwithstanding."

Now the trial was to take place. The Flea jumped so high that nobody could see where he went to, so they all asserted he had not jumped at all; and that was dishonourable. The Grasshopper only jumped half as high, but he leaped into the King's face, who said that was ill-mannered. But the Frog stood still for a long time, lost in thought. It was believed at last he would not jump at all.

"I only hope he is not unwell," said the House-dog; when—pop! the Frog made a jump all on one side into the lap of the Princess, who was sitting on a little golden stool close by.

"The Frog made a jump into the lap of the Princess.'

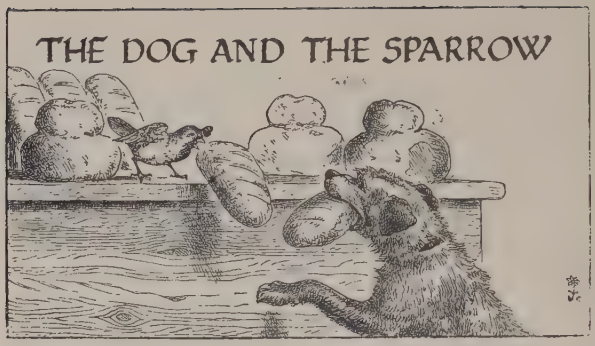
Hereupon the King said : " There is nothing above my daughter ; therefore to bound up to her is the highest jump that can be made ; but for this one must possess understanding, and the Frog has shown that he has understanding. He is brave and intellectual."

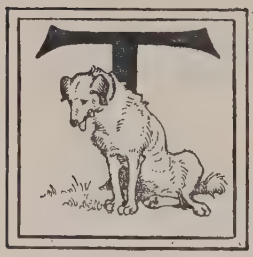
And so the Frog won the Princess.

" It's all the same to me," said the Flea ; " she may have the old Frog, for all I care. I jumped the highest, but in this world merit seldom meets its reward. A fine show on the outside is what people look at nowadays."

The Flea then went into foreign service, where, it is said, he was killed. The Grasshopper sat without on a green bank, and reflected on worldly things ; and he said, too : " Yes, a fine outside is everything—a fine outside is what people care for." But the Frog had the Princess and was contented.

Adapted from Hans Christian Andersen.





THERE was once a Sheep-dog who had all his life been well cared for. But at last he fell into the hands of a master who treated him cruelly, beating him often for no fault, and not giving him enough to eat. He bore these hardships patiently for a time, but in the end could endure them no longer, and ran away, meaning to get a living as best he could by himself. He had only been a Sheep-dog, so that he was not likely to suit everybody, and he found that it was not easy to keep himself without a master, even though he were a cruel one.

He was wandering along the road, very sad and lonely, when he met a cheerful little Sparrow.

"Good-morning, Friend Dog," said the Sparrow. "You look very sorrowful. What is the matter with you?"

"I am hungry and alone," answered the Dog. "My

master used me harshly, and I ran away ; but now I find I cannot get a living."

" Is that how it is ?" said the kind Sparrow. " Come with me into the town, and I will soon give you plenty to eat."

So they went on together, and journeyed till they came to a butcher's shop in the town.

" Here is the place," said the Sparrow. " Stand here by this block while I peck you down the meat from it."

The Dog stood by, and the Sparrow flew on to the block, and began pecking, pecking, first on one side, then on the other, at a fine piece of meat, till she got it to the edge of the block, and pushed it over to the Dog, who fell upon it and carried it off to a safe corner, where he ate it greedily.

" That was good, Friend Sparrow; thank you," he said.

" Could you eat another piece like that ?" asked the Sparrow.

" Yes, readily."

" Come, then ; let us go on to the next shop, and I will peck you down another fine piece of meat."

So they went on to the next butcher's shop, and the Sparrow pecked a piece of meat down for the Dog in the same way as before.

" Was that good ?" she asked, when the Dog had eaten it. " Would you like some more ?"

" It was very good, Sparrow," answered the Dog. " I do not want any more meat, but I should dearly like some bread to end this fine feast."

" Come, then, we will soon see about that ; let us go to the baker's."

So they went to the baker's, and there lay some new rolls and loaves on a table. The Sparrow pecked

down first one and then another, and then more, till the Dog had eaten his fill.

"Now is that enough?" she asked, when the Dog had finished the bread.

"Yes, Sparrow; I am well satisfied: you have been very kind to me. Let us walk on together, and get out of this hot town into the country."

So they walked on together till they came to a place where the trees overshadowed the road, and made a cool space.

"I am tired and hot, Sparrow," said the Dog. "I should like to lie down and sleep."

"Very well, then," answered the Sparrow. "Nothing is simpler. Lie down there, and I will perch upon this branch while you sleep."

The Dog lay down in the road, and in a trice was fast asleep. But the Sparrow kept watch on the bough above him. Presently she saw coming along a Waggoner with a great cart laden with two casks of wine, drawn by three Horses. He was a surly-looking fellow, and though he saw the Dog he did not try to turn his heavy cart aside or to wake the Dog, but made as if he would drive clean over him.

"Waggoner, Waggoner, take care!" cried the Sparrow loudly, seeing this; "take care, and do not harm the Dog, or I will make it the worse for you."

"*You* will make it the worse for me? What harm can *you* do?" said the savage Waggoner with a laugh, and with that he cracked his whip, urged his Horses on, and drove the waggon right over the Dog, killing him instantly.

"Oh, cruel villain!" cried the Sparrow in a rage. "You shall pay for this! You have killed my comrade the Dog. Mark my words—it shall cost you everything you have—Horses and cart and all!"

"Horses and cart!" said the Waggoner jeeringly. "What harm can you do me, I should like to know?"

He drove on, paying no heed to the Sparrow or to the poor Dog whom he had killed. But the Sparrow was as good as her word. She flew behind him, and alit on one of the casks in the cart, and fell to pecking at the bung of it. In a little while she loosened it, and pecked it out. Immediately the wine began to run out, and in a few minutes the cask was empty.

The Waggoner heard the wine dripping, but he only looked round in time to see the last drops trickling out. The cask was useless and spoilt.

"A whole cask of wine lost! I am ruined!" he cried.

"Not ruined enough yet!" said the Sparrow; and she flew at one of the three Horses, and pecked him about the head till he reared and kicked. When the Waggoner saw this, he took his hatchet, and sprang out of the cart, and aimed a blow at the Sparrow, meaning to get rid of her once for all. But the Sparrow was too quick for him. He missed his aim, and the hatchet fell on the poor Horse, and killed him on the spot.

"Oh, I am ruined!" cried the Waggoner. "I have lost my best Horse and a cask of wine!"

"Not ruined enough yet!" answered the Sparrow, flying off for a moment.

The Waggoner climbed into the cart again, and drove on with his two remaining Horses. As soon as he had started, back came the Sparrow, and crept into the cart. This time she settled on the second cask of wine, and pecked the bung out before the Waggoner knew she was there. The wine ran out quickly, and the Waggoner only discovered it in time to see the last of it.

"Oh, this is worse and worse!" he cried. "I am utterly ruined, with my wine all gone."

"Not ruined enough yet!" said the Sparrow, and she pecked at the second Horse, till he, too, reared, and nearly upset the cart. The Waggoner in a rage jumped down, and cut at the Sparrow with his hatchet; but he missed again, and the blow killed the second Horse Then the Sparrow fell upon the third Horse, and the Waggoner struck so blindly in his fury that he killed this Horse too.

"Oh, I am ruined indeed!" he groaned, when he saw what he had done.

"Not ruined enough yet!" cried the Sparrow. "Now I will visit your home, and ruin you there too!"

The Waggoner looked at his Horses and his empty casks. "That wretched bird has taken them all from me," he said. "I must go home on my own legs."

He trudged home wild with anger. His wife met him at the gate.

"Husband," she said, "come quickly! Some plague has fallen upon us; we have hardly a grain of corn left! A little while ago a vile Sparrow arrived with a troop of birds—I should think he brought all the birds in the world—and they are all together at work upon our sheaves, and I cannot drive them off."

The Waggoner ran out to his cornfield, where that morning the white sheaves had stood, ripe and full, ready for carting. A great cloud of birds flew off as he arrived. Some stayed to finish off the last few ears of the good grain.

"Shoo!" shouted the Waggoner, waving his hat.

"Shoo!" cried his wife.

"Mew, mew!" said their Cat, who had run out with them.

"'The Birds have not left a single whole ear of corn.'"

"It is no use, wife," said the Waggoner. "The Birds have not left a single whole ear of corn. The Sparrow has killed my Horses, and stolen my wine, and now has eaten my grain. I am utterly ruined!"

"Not ruined enough yet!" cried the Sparrow. "Your cruelty to my comrade shall cost you your life!"

The Waggoner went into his house, sad and sorrowful at his losses. He sat down by the chimney corner, and thought gloomily on his evil fortune.

"Waggoner," cried the Sparrow, suddenly appearing outside the window, "your cruelty shall cost you your life."

The Waggoner jumped up in a frenzy, seized his hatchet, and flung it at the Sparrow. It broke the window, but did her no harm, and she flew in through the hole it made.

"Your cruelty shall cost you your life!" she screamed, as she perched on a chair.

"Wife, wife, come and catch this vile Sparrow!" shouted the Waggoner. "She is in here!"

His wife came running in with the Waggoner's hatchet, which she had picked up outside.

"Your cruelty shall cost you your life!" cried the Sparrow.

"Give me the hatchet," said the Waggoner, snatching it from his wife's hand, and he aimed a furious blow at the Sparrow. But she flew lightly out of the way, and the hatchet only smashed the chair to splinters.

"Your cruelty shall cost you your life!" piped the Sparrow, more loudly than ever.

The Waggoner struck at her again, but only made a great gash in the wall. His wife took the kitchen poker, and together they pursued the Sparrow, hitting at it wildly on all sides, till they had broken everything in the

house without so much as touching the Sparrow, who still cried defiantly: "Your cruelty shall cost you your life!"

But at last she grew a little weary, and by keeping calm and careful the Waggoner caught her in his hand.

"Now we have the wretch, husband," said the woman. "Squeeze her to death in your hand; a touch will do it."

"No, wife," he answered. "She has ruined me: look at our house. She shall die a worse death than that. I will swallow her alive."

With that he put his hand up to his mouth. But the Sparrow, struggling, got her head free.

"Waggoner, your cruelty shall cost you your life!" she cried.

"Take the hatchet, wife," said the Waggoner, mad with rage, "and strike this wretch dead at once; I will not wait to swallow her."

The wife seized the hatchet, swung it up, and struck at the Sparrow. But she missed it, and hit her husband, and he fell down dead.

But the Sparrow escaped from his hand, and flew off to her nest, having avenged her friend the Dog.

THE SQUIRRELS DREAM

"ROUND, round goes the cage; ever twirling, ever jumping am I," said a tame Squirrel one day, a short time after his young master had hung the cage outside the door, near some wide-spreading oaks. "Oh, how I long to be let loose out of doors, that I might join those merry fellows who now and then pay me a visit, and let fall an acorn or two! But, ah! such happiness, I am afraid, will never be my good fortune."

Thus thought Master Pug, for such was our Squirrel's name. Of his early life we can only say that he had been brought up with the utmost kindness from a time when he was found in the woods half drowned, and when he was so very, very little that he had been fed with milk out of a spoon. Why he was named Pug we have not been able to learn, and we are positive that it disturbed not his peace of mind to be called Pug; indeed, there is every reason to believe that he prided himself in his name, for when anyone said, "Pug, dear! pretty Pug!" he would stay his gambols, and be sure to win from those who called him an

acorn or a nut. And then to see him open that nut! No Squirrel who had even received six lessons could have been more perfect. There was the taking it in the fore-paws—you might almost have called them hands—the seating himself so cleverly on end that it was certain he needed not a chair. Then, too, there was the sawing of the nut, and the turning it over and over until he had opened it; there was the throwing away one half of the shell, and the making use of the other half as a tiny plate to hold the kernel. Oh, Pug was indeed a clever Squirrel for a nut—not a particle was lost—all was eaten except the tiny shell-plate, which he threw away as he went round and round in his cage, galloping, jumping, and frisking, as happy as any squirrel could be.

It was one day—a pleasant autumn day, too—that Pug, as we have just heard, bewailed his lot, for his master had forgotten to give him the accustomed nut-feast after breakfast. Pug's breakfast was generally bread-and-milk, and occasionally a little lump of sugar. Now, such a disappointment was enough to make any Squirrel discontented, however tame and gentle he might be, and as our Pug was like most other squirrels, he naturally felt disappointed, and as naturally complained, although it may be said in excuse for his young master that he had given Pug an extra lump of sugar. But no matter, it was not the nut, so, running round and round with more than usual agility, he fairly put himself out of breath, and then in a melancholy mood went into his snug box, covering himself over with hay for fear he should see his gay fellows leap from tree to tree, and merrily eat the acorns.

Pug had not been long there before the warmth of the bed, and the quantity of bread-and-milk that he had partaken of for breakfast, made him comfortable. He was

very drowsy, when suddenly he heard a voice saying: "Pug, dear! pretty Pug!"

He looked up, and saw one of his gay companions busily engaged eating an acorn.

"Ah!" thought he, "why should not I be allowed my liberty out of doors, as well as indoors?" Scarcely had he expressed such a wish when the lid was lifted up, and Pug was invited to join his merry companions.

"Well, Master Pug," said Miss Squirrel, "how delighted I am to see you this fine morning. Why don't you wake up, and now that the door is open make up your mind to leave that twirly box of yours? Only come with me into the woods, and you will never think of returning to such a home. But make haste, or we shall both be caught."

Pug could not resist this temptation to climb a tree. Off then he bounded to follow his beautiful companion; but when he reached the topmost branch he could not help casting a farewell look at his long-cherished home.

"What makes you stop, dear Pug?" inquired Miss Squirrel. "Surely you are not afraid to leap from one tree to another. But I forgot—your leaps have only been from one side of the cage to the other."

"There, my dear Miss Squirrel, you are mistaken, for my good young master used to let me have a run and a jump about his room, where I have frequently leaped from off his head on to the curtains, and dodged him for a long time, until he threw something over my eyes to frighten me."

"Come along with me, then, into the woods, and see what a beautiful home we have. I am sure my parents will be delighted to make your acquaintance."

"Dear Miss Squirrel, you are exceedingly kind," said Pug; "lead the way, and I will follow."

Miss Squirrel leaped from one tree to another with so much nimbleness that Pug began to get out of breath as he followed; but still he kept close by her side, and after a few more leaps found himself in the midst of the wood, the borders of which he had only seen through his cage, or at most through his young master's window.

When there he was introduced to Miss Squirrel's family. He was shown the nice little home that they had formed, where the branches of the tree were forked, and where they had made a hollow in the decayed timber, and made rooms, and lined them with moss and dry leaves, and bound them together with twigs, so as to keep out the rain and the cold. Then there was the little door just large enough to admit him; and there was the canopy for the door, built like a sugarloaf to throw off the rain and keep their house dry. This was such a snug retreat that our Pug could not think that Squirrels had built it, but his companion's parents told him they would soon teach him how to build one like it, so that he and Miss Squirrel might live happily together.

A feast was now prepared. There were acorns, and nuts, and grains, and seeds in abundance. Pug ate heartily, and after having finished his repast was invited to a game at play by Miss Squirrel. "But first," she said, "you must see our storehouses for the winter." So Pug visited the hollows of the trees, where he saw so many nuts, acorns, and seeds that he thought he should never want an acorn or a nut again.

Thus contented with his change of life, he played at hide-and-seek with Miss Squirrel, and he jumped from tree to tree; and he caught her, then let himself be caught, for he soon found that he was the stronger and more active. The rain now beginning to fall, Pug was

invited to the nest once more, where, having partaken of a few more acorns, he fell asleep by the side of his companion.

He had not slept long before there was a general alarm. Something more than usual shook the tree. All the family were in motion ; and Pug in a fright had only just time to leave his bed and escape from the tree, when he

"He played at hide-and-seek with Miss Squirrel."

saw a boy put his hand into the nest and drag forth Miss Squirrel with her little brothers and sisters.

"Ah !" thought Pug, "that was the way in which I saw my mother taken from me before I was left alone and helpless. I am resolved never to go back again to such cruel men." Thus all kindnesses were forgotten by the recollection of a past wrong.

Pug, having escaped this danger, leaped from tree to tree, scarce knowing what to do with himself. After some time, when the woods were again quiet, he ventured to return and see what had befallen his companions ; but

when he arrived at the tree, he found the snug nest destroyed and poor Miss Squirrel stretched dead on the ground! It was a very mournful sight for him to behold his playmate thus killed by the cruel hand of man; and it made him still further resolve never again to trust himself to man's mercy. So, venturing to feast on the acorns from the storehouse, he determined to set forth on the morrow in search of new adventures. A snug hole filled with moss near the destroyed nest afforded him an excellent retreat, and here he laid himself down to sleep, greatly excited at the thought of the wonders of his new way of life.

The sun had just risen and tinged with light the upper branches of the trees when Pug awoke. Seating himself on end, he began to clean and comb his furry coat with more than ordinary care. He then partook of a hearty meal from the storehouse, and, leaping forth, prepared for his journey. But first he stopped to view the many dewdrops which were glistening on the foliage around, and which reflected the rays of the rising sun like so many tiny looking-glasses. It was a delightful morning—the air was pure, and the heavens showed him their blue, broken only now and then by a fleeting grey cloud. The birds warbled forth their songs of praise, the busy bee and the buzzing insects hummed each a varied tune of joy, the soft lowing of the cows came gently from afar, and even the rustling of the falling leaves, as they were carried along by soft breezes, added to the harmony of the scene. All was joy and gladness, and Pug, partaking of the general cheerfulness, started in search of further adventures.

He had not travelled far when he met a creature very much resembling himself, although it assumed a peculiar

shape while leaping from tree to tree. Indeed, Pug thought it surely must have wings, yet he observed that it could not fly up like a bird. For a long time Pug hid himself, and continued watching the motions of this strange animal with great curiosity.

At length he saw that it was certainly one of his own kind, although it could take longer leaps by spreading out two little sail-like membranes, which seemed fastened to its sides from foot to foot. Pug, being naturally of a timid nature, would not venture to make a new acquaintance; still, he was much tempted, thinking he might be invited to another snug nest and comfortable family party. Leaving this stranger, therefore, to pursue its flying gambols, Pug proceeded on his journey.

He had not given above a hundred more leaps before he heard himself addressed. "Ha, ha, Pug dear! is it you? Why, how came you to escape from that round-about place in which I saw you on my last journey?"

Pug was astonished to hear himself thus familiarly treated, and replied with true Squirrel politeness: "I have not the honour of your acquaintance."

"No. Well, it's not to be wondered at, considering I only peeped in upon you one morning on my travels. But perhaps you may recollect Signor Chirivolo, the great traveller."

Pug had some slight recollection of a Squirrel of that name once dropping him an acorn into his cage; he therefore felt proud and grateful, and they soon became intimate.

"What a pity it is," said Chirivolo, "that so fine a Squirrel as yourself should waste your days in that miserable prison!"

"Stay," interrupted Pug; "I never mean to return

there. I want to see something of the world, and have travelled all the day long, until I am hungry and tired. But pray, can you tell me who that was I just passed, with a long flap which helped her to make much longer leaps than we can do?"

"Certainly I can," replied Chirivolo; "I just passed her myself. Her name is Volucella; she is generally known by the vulgar as the Flying Squirrel. But come, Pug, since you are tired and hungry, we had better go to the adjoining oak, and there enjoy a dinner of acorns."

Pug needed not a second invitation. Following his companion's example, he soon collected in a nice round hole in the middle of the tree sufficient acorns for two good dinners. The morning air had given Pug an extraordinary appetite, and he only left off eating to snuggle himself close to his companion and fall fast asleep.

After two or three hours of profound sleep Pug was awoke by Chirivolo's saying: "Come, we must make haste; travellers never lose their time in sleep. The sun is already going down, and we shall need some exercise to keep us warm."

Pug would have slept a little longer, for he felt himself rather stiff on account of his late journey. Fearful of losing his companion, he made a great effort, and having refreshed himself by carefully washing and combing his fur coat and partaking of some nuts, he again started on his travels.

As they proceeded along they beheld a number of their kindred of different colours, with all of whom Chirivolo seemed to be well acquainted, but with none did he stop to converse, since he said he must make haste and reach Grey Squirrels' Town, where he would introduce him to his

particular friend, Petit Gris, and where he would see hundreds and hundreds, all dwelling securely in the hollows of the old trees.

Thus encouraged, Pug proceeded merrily on his travels. The way, although long, seemed very much shortened by the interesting conversation which Chirivolo kept up concerning his travels. He told Pug that he had met with some of their kindred which were black, and others that were white ; some he had seen variegated, and some even striped. Then there were those like Volucella, but much larger, who seemed to fly ; and there were others so very like themselves that at first he mistook them for real Squirrels, but they afterwards turned out to be only Rats and the like vermin.

Chirivolo gave an account, too, of his hairbreadth escapes from the cunning and cruelty of man, and how he had nearly been shot, having only escaped with the loss of a bit of his ear. Upon this Pug stooped his head, fancying he heard the bang of a gun, which he had seen his young master use. Chirivolo also spoke of their enemies the Hawks and other flying birds, and of many other wonders and dangers, until, shouting with joy, he suddenly cried : "There is Grey Squirrels' Town, and here, I declare, is my friend Petit Gris, the great chief of that colony."

The two friends, as soon as they met, embraced each other, and Pug, as the friend of Chirivolo, was made heartily welcome. A plentiful feast was immediately prepared, and the travellers rested themselves after a hearty meal. Pug fell into a profound sleep—a sleep which lasted so long that Petit Gris came to call him, as all the inhabitants of Grey Squirrels' Town had been at work for full two hours.

Rousing himself, and dressing his furry coat again with

extraordinary care, for fear he should not be considered a worthy companion for the great chief, Pug sallied forth with Chirivolo and Petit Gris to view the extraordinary wonders of Grey Squirrels' Town. This was an excellent occasion for Petit Gris to show his greatness, since all his Squirrel subjects were busily employed repairing their storehouses, for it seems that their great enemies, the Hogs, had committed sad ravages on their property the preceding night.

Pug was delighted at the clever contrivances he saw, and when Petit Gris showed him the great underground magazines of provisions which had escaped their enemies, and when he received a flattering invitation to pass the winter, with his friend Chirivolo, at Petit Gris's palace, he could hardly express his thanks. Thus the whole day was soon passed, Pug having been everywhere received with the greatest kindness and politeness on account of his being the friend of Petit Gris.

This season seemed also to be a particularly busy one with the dwellers in Grey Squirrels' Town. Numbers of them were seen running about the woods, busily employed in bringing all kinds of provision, while others were alike industrious in securing their nests from harm. When Pug retired to the Governor's home, Chirivolo asked him what he thought of his friend's colony. With true Squirrel's politeness Pug declared everything wonderful, indeed, charming : above all delightful, very excellent. The contrivances underground were far superior to the little deposits he had seen in the trees, since no one would think of burrowing underground for acorns and nuts. Chirivolo smiled, and whispered something sufficiently loud to Petit Gris to make poor Pug ashamed of his ignorance.

At this moment a messenger entered ; he was a large Grey Squirrel, but his manner showed that some extra-

ordinary event had happened. A cry of "The Hogs! the Hogs!" was heard on all sides, followed by the discharge of guns, the sound of which Pug knew full well. Trembling with fear, he wished himself safe once more in his roundabout, but he was ashamed to say what he felt, so he prepared to follow his friends.

The news was indeed so alarming that Petit Gris and Chirivolo at once bounded out of their home, quickly followed by Pug. Now all the colony was seen in motion, their hopes being destroyed, for the Hogs were busily rooting up the whole of their winter store, while hundreds of Petit Gris's subjects lay stretched on the ground by the guns of the hunters. Like a retreating army the flight of the Grey Squirrels began; there was no time for rest, the hindmost falling a sure prey to the hunters, who followed close.

Poor Pug felt himself in the most terrible dilemma; but away he bounded, keeping close to Chirivolo and Petit Gris. Night alone stopped the angry hunters' pursuit, and when morning broke there was seen only a remnant of what once formed the great colony of Grey Squirrels. To add to their difficulties, a large stream was now before them. What was to be done? Pug saw certain death before his eyes, and consequently bewailed his fate in loud and bitter cries. Chirivolo only laughed at Pug's fears; but Petit Gris bade him to be of good cheer, since he would show him how he might easily escape if he had but courage. Then bravely going to some pine-trees, he and Chirivolo soon provided themselves each with a piece of bark. Pug stayed not to ask questions, but imitated his companions. Boldly went Petit Gris to the stream, and without waiting for his companions fearlessly launched his piece of the pine-bark on to the waves, seating himself

in it, as if it were a tiny boat. Chirivolo soon followed, laughing at Pug and his fears; but Pug was resolved rather to imitate the chief, who was now seen gliding along, with his bushy tail to the wind for a sail. With difficulty Pug got into his bark, but having seated himself firmly, and spreading out his large bushy tail like Petit Gris, he soon passed Chirivolo, who called aloud for help, as his

"Chirivolo's boat was upset by the wind."

boat was upset by the wind just as a large bird of prey came hovering near. Poor Chirivolo! he was carried high up into the air, a feast for the Eagle's young.

While Pug was looking sadly after his companion another breeze sprang up. Cries of distress began to increase; on all sides he saw the Grey Squirrels with their little barks floating along in fear. Another and another gust of wind; the waves increased. Pug's boat was filling;

it moved heavily; his feet felt the water; leaping involuntarily, he fell into the rippling stream. Then rushed into his ears, nose, and mouth the waters of the flood. Deeper and deeper sunk poor Pug; he felt himself at the bottom of the river; the water pressed heavily on him; he struggled hard for life; he moaned; he once more gave a struggle; he thought of his own snug roundabout; and—he awoke, to find all that had passed to be only a dream!

The joy of Pug on this discovery was increased by hearing himself called: "Pug, dear! pretty Pug! What makes you sleep so? Let his mistress scratch his poll, and come and eat this nut."

He needed not a second invitation; he murmured his thanks, leaped into his twirly cage, and without waiting to crack his nut, played a thousand little tricks to show his gratitude and pleasure.

ONCE upon a time there lived a Dog and a Cat who were always fighting. The Cat could say what she pleased to the Dog, for whatever he did to her it did not hurt her. He used to worry her and beat her as hard as he could, but she only danced about and laughed at him, and called out, "You can't hurt me! You can't hurt me! I had a little pain, but it is all gone now!"

At last the Dog went to a wise Starling, and said to him: "What shall I do to punish the Cat? I bite her, and it doesn't hurt her; I beat her, and she only laughs. Though I am a big Dog, she is also a big Cat, and when she bites and beats *me* it hurts me dreadfully."

"Bite her mouth as hard as you can," said the Starling; "that will hurt her."

So the Dog bit her mouth as hard as he could, but the Cat only danced about and cried out, "You don't hurt me! You don't hurt me! I had a little pain, but it is gone now!"

"What am I to do?" said the Dog to the Starling, for he went at once and told him what had happened.

"Bite her ears and make holes in them," said the Starling; "that is sure to hurt her."

So the Dog bit her ears and made holes in them, but the Cat only laughed and danced about, crying, "You haven't hurt me! You haven't hurt me! Now I can wear rings in my ears!"

And she put fine rings in her ears, and tossed her head at the Dog, and was prouder than ever.

"'You haven't hurt me! You haven't hurt me!'"

Then the Dog went to an Elephant.

"Help me to kill this Cat," he said. "She vexes me continually, and nothing I do to her hurts her."

"Oh, I will kill her for you," said the Elephant. "I am so big, and she is such a little thing that a touch will do it." And he went after the Cat, and picked her up with his long trunk and threw her to the far end of the field.

But the Cat only laughed and danced about, crying out, "You didn't hurt me! You didn't hurt me! I had a little tiny pain, but it is gone now!"

Then the Elephant got very angry.

"I will teach you a better dance than that," said he; and he ran after her and put his great foot on her so that

she seemed quite flattened out. But the minute he lifted his foot the Cat jumped up and danced about, laughing. "You didn't hurt me! You didn't hurt me! Look how well I am! Now I will hurt you!" And she dug all her claws into the Elephant's trunk, so that he ran away screaming with pain, and said to the Dog: "It is no good trying to hurt the Cat. She is one of the Tiger tribe, and you had better keep out of her way."

"Nonsense!" said the Dog angrily; "there must be some way of hurting her. I will bite her nose."

So he ran after the Cat, and bit her nose as hard as he could.

But the Cat only laughed and danced about. "You can't hurt me!" she cried; "I always wanted to wear a ring in my nose, and now I can!"

And she put a splendid ring in her nose, and held her head higher than ever, and was full of pride.

"I will bite her tail in half," thought the Dog, and next time they met he bit her tail in half. But the Cat only danced about and laughed at him.

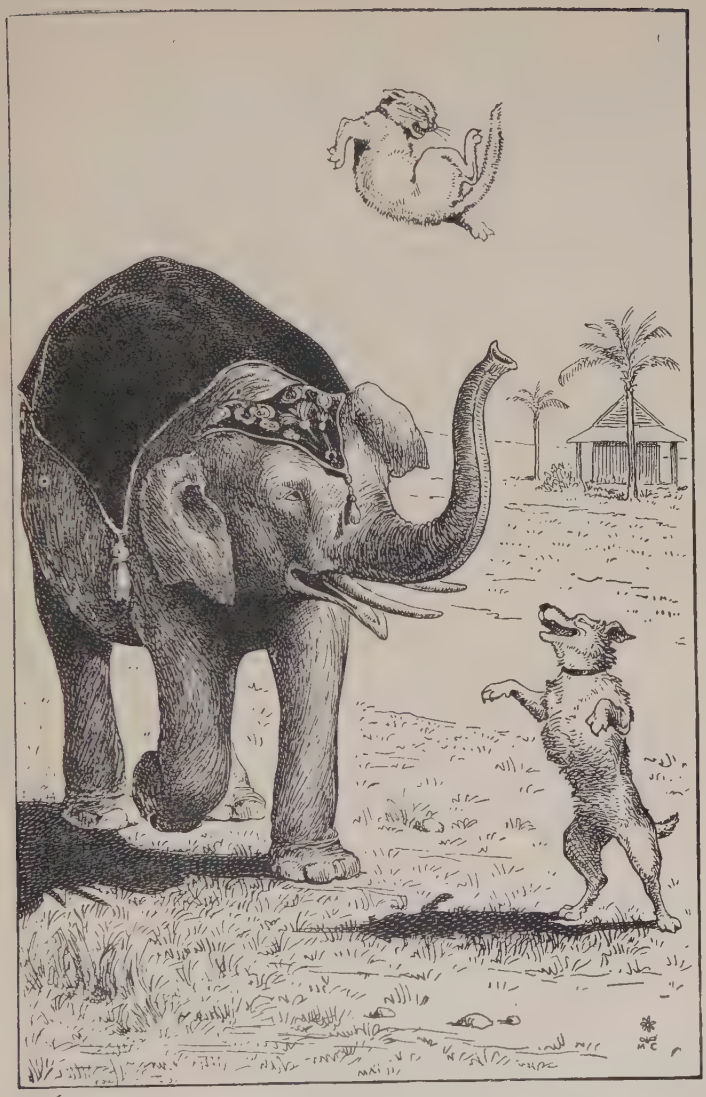
"Now I have some comfort at last!" she cried. "My tail was so heavy to carry, and now it is light as air! What fun this is!"

Off went the Dog to a Leopard.

"Kill this Cat for me," he begged, "and I will give you anything in the world you ask for."

"Certainly," said the Leopard; "there can be nothing easier."

So they went after the Cat, and the Leopard was just going to catch hold of her when she cried out: "Stop a minute! I must speak to you first! I will give you something to eat, and then I will speak to you!" And



"The Elephant threw the Cat to the far end of the field."

she ran away as quick as lightning with the Leopard after her.

When they had run a mile the Cat stopped and danced about and shouted out: "You can't catch me! You can't catch me! I won't give you anything to eat, and I won't speak to you!"

"That Cat is too clever," said the Leopard to the Dog. "I advise you to leave her alone in future."

But the Dog went to a Bear, and begged him to kill the Cat.

"That is quite simple," said the Bear; and he ran after the Cat and dug all his great nails into her. But she slipped from under his paws, and dug her nails into him so fiercely that he died on the spot.

Then the Cat laughed and danced, and shouted so loudly, "Nothing can hurt me! Nothing can hurt me! There is no animal so clever as I am!" that the Dog gave up in despair, and let her alone for ever afterwards.

THE FOX'S SON

REYNARD the Fox, of whom the tale has been told, came in time to his end. Before he died he lost favour with the Lion, the King of the Beasts, for he could never mend his evil ways, and defeat, disgrace, and death came upon him together. Knowing that no shifts could avail him further, he sent away from Malepardus, before his enemies had caught him, his two sons, Reynardine and Russel, with the greater part of his hoarded treasure, in order that they at least might escape safely, and in time (so he hoped, and so he counselled them) be revenged upon Firapel the Leopard and Sleek the Panther, who had been foremost in causing his downfall.

Reynardine and Russel journeyed safely to a cave in a distant forest, in the country of Longwood, and there for a little while waited peacefully with the treasure. Presently there came to them, by a trusty messenger, the news that their father Reynard had been taken and

hanged, and that they themselves had been declared outlaws.

They dismissed the messenger, showing no fear. But when he had gone, "If this is true, brother," said Russel, "it is time for us to divide our father's treasure between us."

"No, Russel," answered Reynardine, "it is not yet time. Rather let us remove the treasure farther into the wood, for greater safety, now that the hand of every man and beast is against us."

"We will, indeed, move it," said Russel. "But we will divide it first."

"We will not divide it yet!" said Reynardine angrily.

"I tell you it shall be divided, here and now!" replied Russel, raising his voice.

"It shall not!" shouted Reynardine.

And thus they quarrelled noisily, and almost came to blows. But it chanced that Corbant the Rook, their father Reynard's old enemy, passed that way at the time; and he could not but hear their loud voices and angry cries, and sought the place whence the sound came. As soon as he saw who they were, he rejoiced in his heart. "Now I have Reynard's sons in my power at last," he thought. "I will have my revenge for all my wrongs." And he flew off swiftly to the Tiger, to Bruin the Bear, and Isegrim the Wolf, and brought them with all speed to Longwood to seize the Fox's sons.

They came joyfully and in haste. In less time than it takes to say it, the struggle was over. The cubs, taken unawares in the darkness of night, had no chance in the fray. Russel, who with all his faults was brave, died fighting; but Reynardine was off and away before many blows had been struck, leaving his brother to defend the treasure alone.

At first the robbers made very merry over their ill-gotten gains, and were full of mirthful and pleasant conversation ; but after a time the difficulties of dividing the spoil destroyed this happy state of affairs.

They had made a heap of all the treasure, and now the question arose as to who should have first choice among them.

" I see no difficulty," said the Tiger. " In this world the greatest riches go to those who are of noblest birth, and everyone gives way to beauty. As I am not only of nobler birth than anyone present, but also by far the handsomest of us all, the first choice will, of course, be mine."

" Softly, friend," replied Bruin the Bear, with some vexation. " Those whose taste inclines to stripes may be your admirers, but I venture to say that a plain coat is in much better taste, and that my appearance is fully as handsome as your own. Also, I am of no less noble birth than yourself, as everyone in the forest knows."

" Birth and beauty are all very well," remarked Isegrim the Wolf, " and when you have settled which of you is the best-looking and the best-born, you can take what you please. Meanwhile I will help myself," which he at once proceeded to do, making choice of the finest part of the treasure.

Neither the Bear nor the Tiger could allow such high-handed action on the part of the Wolf, and they both fell upon him in anger, so that a fierce and noisy battle began to rage between the three of them. As they were growling and snarling, the King's son, the young Lion Prince, who had been hunting with his followers in the forest, heard the tumult, and came up to know what it was all about. Finding the dispute to be concerned

with so valuable a treasure, he spoke to them with much severity on the sin of stealing, and forthwith ordered his servants to drive them away and to seize the booty and convey it to the palace of the King. Thus the treasure did no more good to the last thieves than to the first.

In the meanwhile Reynardine went swiftly on his way from the scene of battle, and after he had gone some distance very warily, he came out of King Lion's realms into the Duchy of Manton. There before long he fell in with Brocket, the son of Grimbart the Badger, who had been a firm friend to Reynard the Fox.

Brocket took Reynardine with him into a safe parlour, where they talked matters over, and, after a good meal and a rest, decided to fare forth together in search of some house where Reynardine, by helping in the kitchen, could earn food and lodging. It was not long before they found an Earl's castle, where Reynardine was promised shelter in return for some daily work, and there Brocket bid his cousin farewell.

"A bird in the hand is worth two in a bush, Cousin Reynardine," said he. "Stay here until something better turns up. And take my advice to be very wary of Grimlook the Mastiff, who is porter here, for he is a strong fellow, and not too well-tempered."

Some time went by in ease and comfort for Reynardine. Many servants were employed in the great kitchen, and the saying is that many hands make light work. The duties that fell to Reynardine's share were not very difficult, and he had good food and plenty of leisure time.

But there are some persons who are never content when out of mischief, and Reynardine was not the son

of his father for nothing. By-and-by it was said that fowls and ducks had been slain in the farmyard, which was true enough, for Reynardine would often slip out at night and have a little feast there, taking care to make the porter Grimlook his friend by giving him a share in all he slew. Then the other servants found that someone was taking their food, and presently a watch was set upon the Fox, who became daily bolder and more thievish as he grew fat and strong on the rich fare. He was caught in the very act of stealing a fat bird from the dish, after which there was nothing to do but to turn him out of the house.

Very sorrowfully did Reynardine leave his good quarters, and he felt full of remorse that he had been so foolish. When night fell, he was far from shelter, and without food or hope of any to come.

Weary and hungry, he lay down under a haystack and fell asleep. He was wakened early in the morning by the crowing of a Cock, and sprang from his bed with renewed hope.

"Where there are fowls there is food," said he to himself; and set out to get his breakfast without delay. The Cock, who was enjoying a meal of corn, very soon provided Reynardine with an excellent meal himself. Indeed, so hungry was the Fox that nothing but a few feathers remained.

When he was well fed, Reynardine felt his spirits rise, and was ready for any new adventure. Thinking that Manton might for a little time be no good place for him, since he had been discovered to be a thief, he made his way swiftly into the neighbouring kingdom of Zalap. And here good fortune befell him at once. He fell in by chance with Zani the Ape, the son of that Dame

Rukenaw who had befriended Reynard his father in his need.

"Cousin," said Zani, when he recognised Reynardine. "I am mightily glad to see you alive and well; but I could wish that you were safe again, and among us good subjects of King Lion."

"I dare not enter his dominions," answered Reynardine. "Neither am I safe in Manton for a time." And he told the Ape all that he had done.

"Truly you are in a sad case," said the Ape. "I wish I could take you back with me, nevertheless; I am even now returning home."

"Ah, if I could see my home again!" said Reynardine. "But I fear my enemies. They—— What is that? Who is coming along the forest road yonder?"

They looked at the road. Sure enough, some important person was drawing near on a litter. They could see the lackeys in fine clothes walking with him.

Zani stared for a few moments. Then he laughed heartily. "That is only Dr. Baldwin—Baldwin the Ass, who has proclaimed himself a doctor, and pretends to cure any sickness or hurt. He knows no medicine, but that is nothing. He cries his own praises so loudly that people flock to hear him. Look at him! How richly he is clad, and how solemnly he is borne along!"

Baldwin was passing them as Zani spoke. He wore a fine robe of russet velvet, with a line of black satin down the back; and, to look at his grave air, you would have thought he had in his head all the wisdom in the world.

"He is doubtless going to see Firapel the Leopard," said Zani, "who, I am told, lies sick of the gout."

"Is he indeed sick? I wish I could be his doctor."

Zani gave a cry. "You *shall* be his doctor," he said.

"I will make you as good a doctor as ever Baldwin could be. Nay, you shall win all Baldwin's patients away from him. You can feel a man's pulse, can you not?"

"I can," said Reynardine, "especially if he be a fine fat Cock, or a nice young Rabbit."

"You can bleed people? You can give them a bottle of coloured water, and call it the elixir of life?"

"That I can," said the Fox, "as well as any man."

"Then you are a doctor, Reynardine. There is no more in their art than that."

"Is it so easy as that?" asked Reynardine. "Then indeed I am a great doctor already. Many a Beast have I bled skilfully. But, friend Zani, of what use is it of me to be a doctor if I am an outlaw, known to all men in my own country?"

"Reynardine, you speak foolishly; you are not so wise as your lamented father. I will dye your coat, and shave your tail, and give you a full black periwig to cover your head and ears; and you shall have fine new clothes, so that not a soul, from Lion on his throne down to the little Emmet in the grass, shall know you for Reynardine, the Fox's son."

They talked a little further of this plan of Zani's. But, to cut a long story short, they did not hesitate long over it. Reynardine lay hid in Zalap while Zani procured the things needed for disguise. In a few days all was ready, and they set out for the chief city of the Lion's realms.

The Ape went in advance of Reynardine, to announce his coming. "Oyez, oyez, oyez!" he cried in the market-place. "Know, all men, that there has come hither the learned and excellent Dr. Pedanto, the wisest physician

"'*That is only Baldwin the Ass, who has proclaimed himself a doctor.*'"

on earth. He has healed three Emperors, seventeen Kings, thirty-nine Dukes, and lords and ladies without number. He has visited every country, and can speak thirty-five languages. Dr. Pedanto is to be seen at any hour of the day, at his lodging, five doors from Dr. Baldwin's great house."

With such words as these the Ape beguiled the people, till one and all, whole as well as sick, came flocking to Dr. Pedanto, leaving poor Dr. Baldwin without a single patient. With such simple herbs and potions as Zani taught him Reynardine doctored their complaints; and since many were ill only in fancy, and others needed but an effort to get back their health, there were not many whom he could not cure.

Before long the fame of this wonderful new doctor came to the ears of Firapel, whose gout Dr. Baldwin had failed to cure.

"Son Firapel," said the Leopard to his heir, "go and make an appointment for me with Dr. Pedanto. I have no more faith in Baldwin; he is nothing but a quack who gives the same medicine for all complaints."

"So be it, father," answered young Firapel.

Off he went to Dr. Pedanto's lodging, and, greeting the disguised Fox very respectfully, he asked him to attend on Sir Firapel his father, to cure him of the gout.

Reynardine was highly delighted at the opportunity of revenge, which had come sooner than he hoped. He very soon mixed some potions, among them a bottle of opium poison, which he put in his wallet, and set off with the Leopard's son.

Sir Firapel lay groaning upon a couch, with his swollen foot raised on a cushion.

"Welcome, doctor," said he. "You are only just in time, for this pain is more than I can bear and live."

"Have good cheer, Sir Leopard," replied the Fox with a great show of kindliness. "I have here in my pouch elixirs which have never failed of their object. Drink first of all this cordial, and then this julep. That will dispose your body for sleep. After that, take this draught, drink it off, and you will fall into a deep sleep,

"'Welcome, doctor,' said the Leopard. 'You are only just in time.'"

in which you will lose all your sufferings. With these potions I cured the Emperor of Khorsabad."

With many expressions of thankfulness the Leopard drank off the mixtures, and almost immediately fell into a heavy slumber.

Reynardine, in his doctor's robes, stood by the bedside, surveying his patient with a very meaning smile, which he presently changed to an expression of great gravity, as he addressed the young Leopard:

"I think it only right to tell you that your father's condition is very serious," quoth he. "It is even possible

that the disease has progressed so far that my elixir may not save his life. However, it was his only chance. for without it he could not have lived more than half an hour. Let him sleep, and do not attempt to wake him for twenty-four hours, and we will hope for the best. By the way," he added, "if your father should die, I hope you will not think that I have not exerted my utmost skill on his behalf. The remedy I have given him is severe, but it is the only thing that could possibly be of any use."

"Dear sir, pray say no more," answered the young Leopard in moved tones. He had no great love for his father, who was harsh and cruel. "Rest assured that, whatever happens, I shall always be grateful to you for your efforts to save my dear father."

Then Reynardine drew on his hood and returned to his lodging sedately.

Zani, meanwhile, was beginning to grow somewhat jealous of his cousin's fame. Wherever he went he heard nothing but praises of the great and wise Dr. Pedanto.

"I taught him all his art," thought he. "Why should I sit by and take the position of a servant, when I know as much as he does? Beshrew me, but I will be a wise doctor myself, and earn some fame and money."

On Reynardine's return to his lodging he found the Ape gone; and very soon news came to him that a new doctor of immense learning, having the highest degrees, was practising his arts in the town. People who are always on the lookout for some new thing, now left Dr. Pedanto for this new Dr. Wiseman, and in a short time Reynardine found himself with very few patients left.

Reynardine was greatly disturbed by this. He had had his revenge upon Firapel, it is true, and had won a nice little sum out of his patients while they had lasted. But he wished to make a still larger fortune by this easy way of imposing upon foolish people. He cudgelled his brains to think of a plan to supplant Dr. Wiseman. At last he made up his mind to take a leaf from Zani's own book, and introduce yet a third doctor. He struck up an alliance with Gibbrel the Cat, the nephew of Tybert, Reynard's old enemy, and soon persuaded him to dress himself up and make fine promises, just as Reynardine and Zani had done in their turn.

But Reynardine was not so imprudent as simply to let Gibbrel proclaim himself a doctor. That would have won patients for Gibbrel, and taken them away from Zani, but it would not have given them to Reynardine. Reynardine artfully gave out that a certain patient's case was so serious and strange that he had sent for an even greater doctor than himself—Dr. Abracadabara, physician to Prester John and the Great Cham, learned in forty-nine languages, in black and white magic, and every branch of the art of physic. Dr. Abracadabara and Dr. Pedanto consulted over this case, and in a short time made a complete cure of it; which was not surprising, for Reynardine had simply bribed Sharptooth the Rat to feign a sickness which was as easily cured as caught.

The fame of this cure and of the two allied doctors soon won back to Reynardine all the patients Dr. Wiseman had taken from him. Zani found himself at a loss and could think of no plan to better his fortunes. In his rage and despair he was more disloyal to Reynardine than he had yet been. He told everyone the truth about

Dr. Pedanto—that he was a quack, and no doctor, but the outlawed son of Reynard in disguise.

That was the end of Dr. Pedanto. Reynardine by chance heard news of Zani's treachery in good time, or he would not have escaped with his life. He rewarded Gibbrel with as much of his fortune as he could lay hands upon quickly, and fled in haste, leaving his house, his treasure, and all his belongings, and running as if the mischief were after him. His enemies came eagerly to his house, expecting to catch him, but found him gone. All his goods were confiscated by King Lion, who, after examining Zani strictly, put him to death for helping Reynardine.

Reynardine was now in great distress of mind and body. He knew that he was discovered, and feared that he was pursued, expecting every moment to see the King's messengers leap out upon him and take him prisoner. He need not have felt this fear, for the Lion, thinking that he would never dare return, was content to let him fly from the country without chasing him beyond his dominions. But of that Reynardine knew nothing. He was afraid to ask for food or help of strangers, lest they, too, should recognise him. He made his way secretly and painfully back to the Duchy of Manton, hiding by day, travelling by night, living on what poor food he could find in the woods.

He reached Manton safely, and at once sought to make a living and a fortune for himself again. He went boldly into a village, and there, in the market-place, he chanced upon the help he needed. A quack doctor had set up his stand there, and was summoning all the folk to come to him and be cured of every kind of ailment—even as Reynardine himself had summoned King Lion's

subjects. But this quack went farther: he pretended also to be a wondrous surgeon, and gave out that if anyone had an arm, or a leg, or any part of the body diseased, he would cut off the part affected so dexterously that the patient would feel no pain, and would be healed at once.

Reynardine went up to him warily. "Master, a word with you," he whispered, at a moment when few people were about.

"Say on, fair sir," answered the quack. "I am the most marvellous surgeon and doctor in all the world, and, whatever be your ailment, I will cure it."

"I, too, have been a marvellous doctor," said Reynardine. "I do not come to you to be cured. You can do me a service, and I will serve you in return."

"How may that be?"

"You proclaim that you can cut off a leg or an arm without pain."

"I can do that, and more: I can——"

"I know what you can do, good sir," said Reynard slily. "But can you do what I wish? Can you cut off my ears and my tail for me?"

"That I can," answered the quack. "I can cut them off without any pain to you at all."

"I am not so sure of that; but I will endure the pain if you will cut them off; and, more, I will afterwards stand upon your platform and declare to all people how skilfully and painlessly you have cured me. For this you shall charge me nothing. Is it a bargain?" For Reynardine guessed that the loss of his ears and tail would disguise him as well as could be wished.

"I will do it," said the quack. "You shall stay with me and speak for me till your wounds are quite healed."

Thus they agreed, and thus they did. Reynardine's ears and tail were cut off, and for a week he stood upon the platform and praised the quack for his skill, so that much gold was earned from foolish people. But as soon as the week was up, Reynardine slipped away and made off as fast as he could to the Earl's castle, hoping there to rest and live softly for a time, till the hue and cry against him had died down, and he could return to the Lion's realm.

Not far from the castle he met his old friend Grimlook the Mastiff, who was porter there when Reynardine first abode in the castle. Grimlook at first did not know him, because of his changed appearance. But Reynardine told him who he was, and the Mastiff, when he heard his tale, greeted him kindly, and promised to help him by introducing him to his cousin Brindle, who was now the porter of the castle in his stead.

"I thank you, brother Grimlook," said Reynardine, in answer to this. "There is nothing I desire so much as to get back into the castle and its ease and comfort, for I am sadly wearied and troubled by my misfortunes. But I beg you not to tell your good cousin my name; I think it might not sound well in the ears of those at the castle, for you will remember that they found grievous fault with me when I last was there."

"Yes, Reynardine, I remember."

"Call me Sir Shifter, good Grimlook; that will be a name to please them better than Reynardine."

The Mastiff agreed, and went to his cousin to beg his good offices. But Brindle was a surly, suspicious fellow, and asked him searching questions, and before long Grimlook saw that he must tell his cousin the truth. This he did, saying that Sir Shifter was indeed Reynardine,

but that he meant no harm, and had done no offence in the Duchy of Manton; he had, indeed, offended King Lion, but the Lion's realm was far off, and Reynardine now wished only for peace and an honest living.

At last Brindle said that he would let Sir Shifter in, and tell no one who he really was. But he did not mean to keep his word. As soon as Grimlook had gone to Reynardine with this joyful news, Brindle told all his friends that the knave Reynardine, the son of wicked Reynard, was in their midst, and was coming to the castle that very day under a false name. So, when Reynardine came to the gate, expecting a welcome, he was greeted, not with kind words, but with blows and kicks; there was nothing for it but to turn and run away, which he did with all speed.

Brindle, meanwhile, had told the Earl himself of Reynardine's return, and of the part his cousin Grimlook had played; for he was jealous of Grimlook, and feared that he might oust him from his post, and become porter once more. The Earl, in great wrath, banished Grimlook altogether from his castle, and forbade him to come near him, so that the poor Mastiff got nothing for all his kindness.

Reynardine was once more a wanderer, without a home or friends. But he was no longer without hope. He remembered that he was well disguised. His friend Grimlook had not recognised him at first. He resolved to try his fortunes once more in his own country, and he set out to leave Manton.

He made his way back safely to the Lion's dominions, and sought out his old friend Brocket, whom he found sitting in the door of his house, taking the air and enjoying the warm sun.

"Good-morrow, kind sir," said Reynardine to him in a feigned voice.

"Good-day to you, traveller," answered Brocket in his gruff, hearty voice.

"Is this the way to the castle of Malepardus, where the great Reynard dwells?" asked Reynardine.

"Reynard is dead—hanged for a traitor and a murderer,

"'Good-morrow, kind sir,' said Reynardine, in a feigned voice."

fair sir," said Brocket, looking at him closely. "Take heed how you say in public that you were any friend of his. His castle of Malepardus is razed to the ground, and his eldest son Reynardine is an outlaw. Oh, poor Reynardine! He is a fine fellow, worthy of his father's fame for wit and wisdom! Would that it were safe for him to be here now!"

"It is safe, Brocket! He is here!" cried Reynardine, and forthwith he told his friend of his adventures, whereat Brocket laughed long and loudly.

"You would deceive anyone," he said; "ay, your own father Reynard, if he were alive, would not know you!"

"It is for his sake that I have come back," said Reynardine fiercely. "I want to reward his and my enemies fitly. Firapel the Leopard I have slain; and Zani, the Ape who betrayed me, has justly come to a bad end. But there are others—Brindle the Mastiff, Sleek the Panther. Ah, if I could do the Panther a mischief!"

"He will not know you; enter his household, make yourself his friend, have your own way with him," said the Badger.

It was hardly sooner said than done. Reynardine quickly thought of a tale to tell about himself, and, bidding Brocket a friendly farewell, betook himself to the Panther's fine dwelling. He knocked loudly and boldly at the gate.

"Ho there!" he cried; "I seek entry."

A porter came running. "What is your errand, sir traveller?" he asked.

"I seek the Lord Panther," answered Reynardine. "Go, tell him that a humble stranger, of good birth but narrow means, asks his kindness, and is eager to serve him."

The porter was none too willing to let the importunate stranger in. But Reynardine beguiled him with flattery, and at last was taken to Sleek's presence.

"What do you wish, sir?" asked the Panther graciously, when Reynardine stood bowing before him.

"I wish to enter your service, Lord Panther," answered Reynardine. "I will tell you truly all about myself. My name is Crabron, and I am of a very ancient family dwelling across the sea. For many generations we have

borne that name, and lived in our ancestral home. But of late we have grown poor, and it fell to my lot, fair lord, to seek my fortunes elsewhere. I am the first Crabron who ever left his land for the sake of gain. I could show you our splendid ancient jewels and rich possessions if I had not had to sell my share in order to cross the broad sea and earn my living. I beseech you, sir, to let me serve you, however humbly. I have heard of this noble kingdom from afar, and have long desired to see it, and the fame of your castle, and of your riches, and your great deeds come to my ears so often that I longed to have you for my master, if I must have a master (alas! how low are we Crabrons fallen!). Your glory must be greater than that of King Lion himself. There could be no nobler task than to serve so great a lord."

The Panther was well pleased at this flattery; he had not recognised or even suspected who Reynardine was. But he was of a cruel humour, and would not yield to the stranger at once.

"You seek to serve me?" he said with a sneer, pulling his lips back from his savage teeth. "You shall serve me—serve, you knave, not flatter; you shall do service, I warrant you. Take him to my kitchen," he cried, turning to his attendants, "and tell my cook he may employ the stranger as he will. Let him play turnspit, draw water, sweep floors, since he desires to do service."

They took Reynardine away to the kitchen, and set him to work, making him wash, and draw water, and run all manner of errands for the Panther's cook. It was not what the Fox had hoped, but he knew that he could succeed by his wits even in that lowly position. He served the cook diligently, and studied his ways. If the cook called for pepper, there was Reynardine ready with

it before he asked ; if water were needed, Reynardine, you may be sure, had filled the buckets in good time ; never a joint was burnt or a pudding spoilt while he was in the kitchen.

His good behaviour soon came to the Panther's ears, and he was promoted to wait at table, and there his fine manners advanced him still higher, till he became chief butler, high in his lord's favour, and trusted in everything. Before long his opportunity came.

"Crabron," said the Panther one day as he sat at dinner, "I have eaten too well. I cannot taste these rich dishes ; I am surfeited of them."

"Truly, my lord, good living is sometimes a burden to us," answered Reynardine, looking very concerned. "Perhaps I could tempt you ; in my wanderings I have learnt something of the art of cooking, in a simple, homely way, and I could make you a plain pudding that you would surely relish."

"Do so, good Crabron ; I will sup only off your dishes to-morrow, and see whether I cannot restore my health."

Reynardine chuckled secretly when he heard this command. But outwardly he was all grief and tenderness. The next day he made two or three good puddings, and the Panther ate them with great delight. They were the last food he ever ate ; Reynardine had put a secret deadly poison in them, and Sleek died in his sleep that night. The poison left no sign nor trace behind it. The Panther was found dead by his servants, and none knew what had befallen him.

"Oh, my poor master !" cried Reynardine, when he heard—as he pretended for the first time—the Panther's fate. "There was not such another master in the whole world, and now I have lost him ! I will mourn for him

"'I have eaten too well,' said the Panther. 'I cannot taste these rich dishes'"

all the rest of my days! Never will I enter into service again, for no master could treat me as my lord Sleek did."

Thus he lamented loudly, so that everyone was affected by his great grief. His faithfulness and sorrow were at length reported to King Lion himself; and the King, thinking that so good a servant ought not to be lost, took him into his own household. Reynardine at first pretended to be unwilling to serve him, but the Lion persuaded him by saying that to serve the King, after serving even so noble a lord as the Panther, was no disgrace, but rather a sign of merit.

At last Reynardine felt himself a great man, and safe from all his enemies. He was appointed one of the King's Purveyors, and was in a fair way to make his fortune.

For three months he fared well and safely. But then a thing happened which made him uneasy. Gibbrel the Cat, who had been his assistant when he played the part of Dr. Pedanto, and was deserted by Zani—this Gibbrel appeared at Court seeking office. It was not long before he saw Reynardine, and recognised him.

Reynardine knew that he was recognised, and avoided Gibbrel till he could speak with him privately. He contrived to meet him by giving him a post among his own servants, of whom he now had many.

"Gibbrel," he said, when they were alone, "I am very glad to see you, and it gives me great happiness to be able to befriend you. We were good friends when I was less well off than I am now, and we will remain good friends. You understand, dear Gibbrel, that here I am known as Crabron, for reasons of my own. My family would not like it to be known that once I earned a living as a doctor, even if I was a very wise and prosperous doctor; they are proud, and would despise me if they knew that."

"Yes, Reyn—Crabron," answered Gibbrel, "I can understand that; my family are no less proud. They are always talking of the days when they were princes in Persia, and were waited on by slaves, who brought them cream, and butter, and fat mice, whenever they wished for them, without their having to find such things for themselves."

"Why, dear Gibbrel," said Reynardine, seeing a way to help himself, "I can almost do you that service. I have a cave near here that is full of mice. None of my household will go into it, for fear of the mice. Mice! Nay, there are rats there—rats as big as rabbits. I do not fear them, of course; I would enter the cave if I wished to. But mice are poor things, not worth troubling about."

"Not worth troubling about!" cried Gibbrel. "I will tell you another story about that, if you will lead me to this cave."

"Well, I have never seen a cat catch mice, Gibbrel: I am told they are very skilful at it, and that it is pretty to watch their antics as they chase the creatures. For my part, I think it unworthy of your noble family to care for such paltry food as mice. But I would gladly see something of your skill. I will take you to the cave this evening."

Gibbrel could not thank Reynardine enough for this promise. He would not have been so grateful if he had seen the Fox that afternoon setting a snare in the narrow entrance to the cave, and loosening the big stones above it, so that they would fall easily, and finally leaving two or three dead rats near by, as a sign of what was to be expected within.

The afternoon came, and Gibbrel could hardly conceal his impatience to go to the cave. Reynardine made

delays, in order to excite him still more ; but at last they set out.

"Reynard—Crabron, I mean—do you see that?" asked Gibbrel suddenly, as they drew near the cave.

"What is it?" said Reynardine, looking anywhere but in the right place.

"A dead rat!" answered the Cat. "Do you not see it? There must be plenty here. Look! there is another."

"Oh, those rats—yes," said Reynardine. "They are nothing; you seem to think too much of them. Wait till you get inside the cave. Here we are at last! That is the entrance—that narrow hole. It grows broader as you get in, and the place is full of rat-runs."

Gibbrel could contain himself no longer. He darted to the entrance of the cave, squeezed himself in (for it was no larger than a rabbit-burrow), and at once was caught in Reynardine's snare. The more he struggled, the more securely he was held, and in a few moments his leaps and twists loosened the big stones, and they fell down on him in a heap and killed him.

So Reynardine treacherously freed himself from one who might have betrayed him. And now he thought himself safe, and began to take pleasure again in his office and its rich fees. But it was not long before he found himself once more in peril. He was sitting at the place where he gave his orders one day, when he was told that a stranger wished to enter his service.

"Bid him come before me," said Reynardine, whose custom it was to be polite to all visitors until he saw that they could be of no use to him.

Reynardine's steward brought the traveller in: he was of a fine figure, though dusty with his journey. He did

not look at Reynardine for a moment, but bowed low, and began to address him. "Lord Crabron——"

Reynardine started, and looked at him narrowly. Then he bade his steward leave them, on the pretext of sending him on an errand. He had recognised the visitor: it was Grimlook the Mastiff. And when they were alone, and Grimlook looked his host in the face, he also recognised him.

"You have risen in the world, Friend Reynardine," he said, "since I befriended you at Manton. Perhaps you can do me a good turn now."

"Truly, Grimlook, I will help you, if it were with my last penny," answered Reynardine. "But remember that here I am known as Lord Crabron. My father lived evilly, and I dare not use my real name, which would remind men of his wicked ways."

"Perhaps they would be reminded of other wicked ways too," said Grimlook, with a cunning air that did not suit his simple, rough face. It caused Reynardine to feel uneasy: he did not like the thought of anyone knowing his past deeds.

"Well, Grimlook, that is no matter," he said at last. "I have a clear conscience. But you seek my service, friend. I will find you an honourable post, in return for our old acquaintance. You shall not serve under me; that would not be worthy of you. I will get you an office in the King's own Court. Meanwhile, you shall stay here and be my guest. I will show you that I know how to entertain my friends well. We will feast and be merry."

"I do not know so much about feasting, Crabron," said Grimlook. "Just now I should be content with a good bone."

"A bone, dear Grimlook?" cried Reynardine. "I have some bones that were meant for King Lion himself; but I will put you before him. Wait a few minutes while I inquire of my servants about them."

And he went out quickly. But he did not go to inquire of any servants about them. He took his way to his garden, where there was a deep well, with no windlass and no wall round it. He gathered some branches and grass, and covered the well lightly with them, so that they hid the mouth of it, but would fall in if any weight were put on them. Then he put on top of them one or two fine juicy bones.

"It is as I thought, dear Grimlook," he said, returning to the Mastiff. "The bones have not yet been sent up to the King's palace. They are in my storehouse still. Come, and you shall have a feast such as you may never again taste. We will go by my private path through the garden: it is the shortest way."

"I shall not forget your kindness, Reynardine," said Grimlook, licking his lips, as they made their way out into the garden. "It is long since I had a meal that I could really enjoy in peace. I have had to fight for the little I have got lately."

"You are a great fighter, Grimlook," said Reynardine. "All your race are. It is a wonderful sight to see a Mastiff leap at his enemy—or, for the matter of that, leap upon his food. His muscles——"

"There is a bone there!" cried Grimlook suddenly. "I cannot wait till I get to your storehouse. I must begin at once. Oh, it is a fine bone!"

"That is but a dry stick by the side of those I had kept for the King," said Reynardine contemptuously. "Leave it alone; or, if you must touch it, use it to show

me how you would seize it if another Dog had seen it too, and were about to snatch it."

"Ah, I can easily show you that. No other should take that bone from me," said Grimlook, who fell in with Reynardine's crafty plan, and was going to pretend to show his skill when really he meant to sate his hunger at once. Without any more ado he gave a great bound, alit upon the bone, and crashed through the thin covering of grass and branches into the deep well below, where he was killed instantly.

Thus Reynardine freed himself by treachery of yet another dangerous acquaintance. But he was not to escape his next peril so lightly. He was left in peace for some months after Grimlook's death, and in that time he lived honestly, and prospered, winning high favour with the King for his skill and politeness. Then another enemy came into his reach—a fiercer and more bitter foe—Brindle, Grimlook's cousin, who had formerly betrayed Reynardine. Brindle did not seek favours; he chanced to be at the Lion's Court on some errand, and saw Reynardine, and recognised him. He asked who the King's Purveyor was, and was told it was one Crabron, a great lord and a very powerful person. He asked also other questions, to make sure that it was really Reynardine; but it did not take him long to be certain of it. Straightway he went to the Lion, and told him what he knew, accusing the Lord Crabron, the King's Purveyor, of being none other than the son of Reynard the Fox, and an outlaw and a murderer.

"Wait here; we will see if your story is true," said King Lion, when he heard Brindle's accusation. "Let someone fetch the Lord Crabron, my Purveyor. It will go amiss with this stranger if he has lied to us."

They fetched Reynardine, and he came in haste, wondering secretly if anything of his past evil deeds had been discovered.

"Crabron," said King Lion, "this stranger accuses you of being Reynardine, the outlaw and murderer."

"It is a base lie, sire!" exclaimed Reynardine. "Your Majesty has no more loyal subject than me. All the world knows me, and knows that I am Crabron, your Purveyor."

He looked at Brindle as if to discover who he was, though he had long ago recognised his old enemy. "Ah, I remember this rogue," he said, after a searching look. "He is a dishonest knave who tried to bribe me not to serve you faithfully, my liege, but to do him special favours secretly. The varlet! The villain! And so you have caught him, sire! How wonderfully your realm is ruled!"

Brindle could bear it no longer. He broke past the guards who were standing by him, and sprang fiercely at Reynardine's throat with a roar of rage.

"Seize him!" cried the King, starting up from his throne. "I will have no brawling in my presence. Cast him into a dungeon."

"Fetter him well, guards," added Reynardine; "he is a strong and slippery knave."

They led poor Brindle away, and Reynardine watched him being taken, with a feeling of relief in his heart. He thanked the King humbly for hearing his answer to Brindle's charge, and left the presence. But the Lion, though he did no more then, remembered carefully what Brindle had said.

Late that night, when the duties of the day were at last over, Reynardine doffed his rich robes of office, and clad himself humbly in the dress of a footman of the Court. He prepared a savoury dish of meat, and put in it a deadly

poison. Then he took the dish, and a scroll bearing the King's signature, and went to the prison where Brindle lay. He knocked at the gaoler's door.

"Good-evening, sir," he said, when it was opened. He spoke in a feigned voice, for he held a stone in his mouth for the purpose. "You have one Brindle here in ward, have you not, for attacking the Lord Crabron, the King's Purveyor?"

"Yes," said the gaoler.

"The King has had pity on the poor wretch," continued Reynardine.

"That is well," said the gaoler; "for Brindle lies in as vile a dungeon as we have—cold and damp and bare—and he has had no food all day."

"The King's mercy and wisdom are wonderful," said Reynardine; "he foresaw this, and has sent this hot dish to the prisoner, that he may not be punished too harshly. I am one of his footmen, and he bade me take this dish to Brindle with my own hands."

"How am I to know that?" asked the gaoler. "Your dish may conceal a file, or a dagger, or keys, for all I can tell. I have only your word for it."

"Read this scroll, and see the King's signature at the foot of it. It gives me authority," said Reynardine boldly.

It was a desperate moment for Reynardine. The scroll was but an old, useless written command from the King, bidding Crabron prepare for some feast long since past. But Reynardine trusted in the gaoler's not being able to read, and he was right. The gaoler glanced at the scroll, pretended to read it (though he held it upside down), and said with a wise air: "Yes, I see that you have authority. Here are the keys of Brindle's cell; it is at the foot of this steep staircase."

Reynardine took the keys, went to the cell, and gave the miserable Brindle the dish, of which he was very glad. Then the Fox went away, feeling safe once more.

The next day Brindle was found dead, and none knew how he came by his end, for the poison had left no trace. Reynardine was not suspected, nor did the gaoler think that his visitor of the night before was other than he pretended to be. But the King had not forgotten what had happened; he was not going to let the matter drop without inquiry. He sent for Reynardine once more.

"Crabron," he said gravely, "this Brindle who attacked you yesterday is dead."

"I have been told so, sire," said Reynardine. "You are well rid of a knave, though it would have been better if justice could have been done upon him in due form."

"We always do justice," said the King, looking so narrowly at him that Reynardine felt uneasy. "Justice shall be done to everyone—to murderers, outlaws, traitors, as well as to poor simple souls who do but let their rage get the better of them." Reynardine felt yet more uneasy: what did the King mean? But he was still speaking. "I think, Crabron, we must look farther into this matter. You did not answer Brindle's charge."

"Not answer it, sire? I——"

"You did not answer it: you only said that it was a lie. You gave no proof. We have a way to find out the truth. Ho, there!" he cried to his guards. "Seize this Crabron, and put him on the rack."

Reynardine protested and raged, but it was no use. The guards took him to the torture-chamber, and there put him on the dreadful rack. They had hardly begun to turn the levers before Reynardine cried out, as if in agony; and when the rack really hurt him a little he

howled dismally, and screamed that he would confess. They set him free, and then and there he owned to all his crimes, and said that he was indeed Reynardine the outlaw.

There was no more to be said : everything was confessed. The Lion sentenced Reynardine to be hanged the next day, and he was taken to prison to await his sentence.

As he was led away he groaned, and stumbled so often that he could hardly walk, pretending that the rack had crippled him. The gaoler, seeing his sorry state, took pity on him, and did not give him further pain by fettering him.

That was exactly what Reynardine wanted. During the night (for the rack had hardly hurt him at all) he worked like a madman, digging with his strong paws till his nails were almost worn away. Before dawn he had made a tunnel under the prison wall, and was free.

But he was not long free. He fled as fast as he could to Pitwood, where he rested quietly for a short time. Then the need for food oppressed him, and he fell upon and slew some chickens. The next day he did the like, and the next, and for a week he lived royally on his prey. But the neighbours soon saw that the chickens were disappearing : they set a watch, and saw Reynardine at work. They sent word at once to the King, and Quickscent the Lurcher and other good fighters were despatched to arrest Reynardine. It was not difficult, for his joy at being free and faring well had made him careless.

So Reynardine was brought back to Court again ; and there was to be no running away this time. A strong guard watched him day and night till the gallows was set up. When all was ready he was led forth, bound. The King and all his nobles were present to see sentence executed.

"Reynardine," said the King sternly, "you have confessed your crimes, and grievous they are—as grievous as any done by your rascal of a father, Reynard. You are now to pay the just penalty for them. Do you wish to say anything before you die?"

Reynardine appeared overcome with sorrow. "I have done great wrong, my liege," he said, "both to you and to many others. It is right that I should be hanged. But I would that you could let me live but another week. Certain friends have served me in many honest ways from time to time, and I should wish to reward them fittingly. When I was your Purveyor I could save little money, for I lived well and splendidly, in order that I might not dishonour your service by appearing mean and grasping. I have nothing left from that service to give to my friends. But if I could only live a week or ten days, I should come into wealth again, and could then give them suitable gifts; and perhaps I could bestow even upon you, sire, some little riches, in token of my sorrow. If I could do that, I should die happy."

"I do not understand you, Reynardine," said the King. "How can you be richer in a week's time than you are now?"

"What use is it to tell my secrets if I must die to-day?" asked Reynardine sadly. "But I will tell you all, that you may judge if I am right. You know that my father Reynard was very rich?"

"Yes, Reynardine. You had better not remind us of his riches, for he got them by evil ways. Besides, we have his treasure in our coffers already. My son seized it from those Beasts who took it from you and quarrelled over it."

"That was no treasure," said Reynardine, with con-

tempt. "It was but a pocketful of halfpence compared with my father's real wealth. My brother and I could not carry away from Malepardus all the treasure at one time, so for many weeks before we finally fled from the castle we journeyed from Malepardus to Longwood and back, carrying a little at a time, and burying it in the ground. When it was all buried, except so much as we needed for our daily wants—so much as Corbant and the rest stole from us, as your son the Prince found—we paid a fee to the great magician Adramand. He wove a spell about the place where the treasure lies, so that none could find it till a year had passed; and then only Russel and I could do the magic rites necessary to discover it. Russel, alas, is dead!"—Reynardine shed a tear—"and I alone know the secret of the treasure. Now, if your Majesty will deign to remember the sad end of my father Reynard, you will notice that it took place almost a year ago. Adramand's spell runs out this week, and if I were free and at the right place I, and I only, could reveal this wonderful treasure. O my liege, you know not what lies buried in Longwood: chains of gold, chains of silver, rubies, emeralds, sapphires, diamonds, crowns, necklaces, pins, cups—every setting and every precious stone is there, for my dear father had curious lore in jewels, and loved to see them sparkling in the noblest and most fitting manner. Gold of Ophir is there, and rubies from stony Arabia; spice also and silks from the East; coins, statues, enamelled rings; gold, gold, silver and gold——" Reynardine stopped, breathless. Then he continued in a different voice: "Now hang me, King Lion. I have deserved death. One who has lived as wickedly as I does not deserve the pleasure of rewarding his dear friends or his King. Let the treasure be hid; let no man evermore

look upon the most glorious wealth that ever dazzled eyes ; let me die."

"Reynardine, you deserve to die," said the King, whose covetousness was excited by this story ; "but it is possible your offences have not been so great as we think. Perhaps, if you gave poison to Firapel, it was by accident ; and Gibbrel and Grimlook certainly brought their own death upon themselves, through greed. There is something to be said for you, though we cannot pardon you. Besides, your father also had some lying story of a treasure."

"His story was never proved either true or untrue, sire," said Reynardine quickly, seeing that his tale was having its effect. "And everyone knows that he had great wealth."

"Yes, yes," answered the Lion. "But we must make sure that you speak the truth ; if you have lied, you shall die."

"And if I have not lied," thought Reynardine to himself, "I shall save my skin. But I have lied. Well, I must trust to find a way of escape, if I can only gain time now." But he said nothing aloud.

"We will grant you a reprieve, Reynardine," said the Lion. "You shall go to Longwood, and do your magic rites. With you shall go Quickscent the Lurcher, for a guard. We authorise him to kill you on the spot if you try to escape ; and if the treasure be not found where you say it is, you shall surely be hanged for a thief, a murderer, and a liar. That is our decree."

Reynardine could hardly contain himself for joy, though he was not yet safe. But he put on an air of respect and humility as he thanked the King.

In a little while Reynardine and Lurcher set out, and it was no great time before they arrived at Longwood.

Reynardine led the way deep into the forest, which he knew well : had he not taken refuge there many a time ? They came at last to a place of dense, tall trees, very dark and gloomy, with rocks hidden beneath the undergrowth, and in one place a little cave where a Beast could shelter in bad weather.

" Here lies the treasure, Lurcher," said Reynardine.

" I hope, for your sake, that that is so," answered Quickscent grimly.

" Do you think I would deceive the King ? I tell you the treasure is here. Now we must make a clear space, for I have to draw magic circles and lines, and perform strange rites. You can rest in the little cave there and watch me. It may be that for two days and nights, or even three, I must recite spells and incantations. Now to work !"

He made the Lurcher dig and tear up roots and bushes. They toiled together for fully half a day, Reynardine concealing very skilfully the fact that he himself was doing little of the work. When they had made an open space, Quickscent was utterly weary, and threw himself down in the cave to watch Reynardine at his magic arts. Before he knew it, he fell fast asleep.

Reynardine might easily have escaped at that moment. But he was not sure that the Lurcher was not deceiving him and pretending to sleep, so as to catch him unawares and kill him. And he wished to give his guard confidence. He took no notice of Quickscent, but went on with his rites as if he really believed in them. He drew a circle with a pointed stick, and lit a little fire in it. Then he chose some herbs, gathering them carefully in this spot and that, and threw them on the flames, so that they crackled and gave out a sweet scent. Reynardine watched

the fire for a time. Then he muttered strange words, and waved his forepaws in curious circles, and paced to and fro rapidly, his eyes fixed on the flames. Then he sat down again, till the flames sank. On that, he collected more herbs, and again made the magical passes and ran to and fro. And thus he continued till far into the night, never ceasing for one moment for food or drink. Quickscent woke up from time to time and looked at him, but

"Reynardine muttered strange words, and waved his forepaws."

could not understand his arts. He thought that this must indeed be magic, and that presently the earth would open and reveal the treasure. At night he slept soundly. So did Reynardine ; but he took care to sleep only when he heard Quickscent snoring. Whenever Quickscent awoke, there was the Fox carrying on his enchantments.

The next day Reynardine did the same, save that he

ate a little food, by snatches, as if he must not leave his magic circle for long. It rained that day, and he had much ado to keep the fire alight; but the rain was helpful to him, for the Lurcher stayed in the cave to avoid it.

The second night came, and Reynardine seemed likely to work his magic all through it. Quickscent muttered to himself: "I cannot watch the fellow every minute. He could have escaped, I dare say, while I slept last night, for I cannot deny that I closed my eyes for a few minutes now and then; though, to be sure, if he had escaped, I should have known it, for the fire would have gone out, and I should have waked. I will sleep to-night soundly. Reynardine really has the treasure here, and he will not want to run away."

He composed himself for sleep, and in a little while was snoring more loudly than ever. Reynardine had been waiting for this. He heaped up his fire well, so that it should not burn down for a long time, and then away he went, as fast as his legs could carry him. He did not rest till he was far off in the Kingdom of Zalap.

In the morning Quickscent awoke. The fire was only a little heap of ashes. The magic circle was still there, and the earth wet with dew and rain; but Reynardine was gone—gone so many hours before that the Lurcher could not pick up his scent to follow him. Sad and heavy of heart, after searching all round in vain, he left Longwood, and made his way back to the King, and told his tale.

The Lion was very wrath at Reynardine's escape. If Quickscent had not been an old and tried servant, he would have killed him on the spot. Instead, he banished him, forbidding him to return unless he brought Reynardine with him as a prisoner. He placed a great price

on Reynardine's head, and bade all his subjects search diligently for him.

The hue and cry was out. But the cleverest of the Beasts, for all their pains, could not find Reynardine. He seemed to have vanished off the face of the earth. One by one they gave up the search; only the Lurcher still wandered in distant lands looking for his lost prisoner.

It chanced one day, many weeks after Reynardine's escape, that Witless the Ass, the nephew of Baldwin, was passing through Zalap. He lost his way, and wandered aimlessly about, meeting no one. He was weary, and, seeing at last a fine house with a great stable-yard, made his way to it. A noise of revelry and mirth came from the house, but Witless did not heed that. He sought the yard, and looked into it over a low wall. There, almost beneath his nose, lay Reynardine, comfortably asleep on a good bed of hay and straw. The other Beasts in the yard showed no fear of him. Cocks and hens walked about freely; dogs did not bark. Evidently Reynardine was an honoured guest.

Witless woke the Fox and arrested him. Never was a Beast more taken aback. But he had his excuse ready, and it did not take a very subtle excuse to deceive the simple-hearted Witless.

"Witless, old friend," said Reynardine, "I am mightily glad to see you. I have a message and some gifts for your uncle Baldwin. Of course, I will go with you to the Lion's Court. I did not know, till you told me, that the King desired my presence. Has he not found the treasure? I took myself away from the place where it lay hid, because it was dangerous to stay there when the spell was taken off: magic is a difficult art. But the Lurcher should have told the King that the treasure was

revealed. However, I will certainly go with you. On the way I will tell you this message for Baldwin, and we will find the gifts. I practised medicine at one time, as you know, and I wish, now that I have no more use for them, to send him the recipes for my juleps and ointments : he will be glad to have them. I shall never be a doctor again : life is too easy here. Do you know the house where you found me ?"

" No," answered the simple Witless. " I do not know this country at all : I had lost my way when I chanced upon you."

" Ah, well, it does not matter : I can take you straight to Court. I know the way well. The house, let me tell you, is Squire Careless's. He is a good, kind man, though they tell me that he spends his money too rashly. He took me willingly, and made the other Beasts in his household act civilly towards me : and, in return, I did not molest them. I was very comfortable, I assure you."

With this pleasant conversation Reynardine passed the time, as he and Witless walked together. Now and then Reynardine would say, " We turn off here," " Here the road goes to the left," or, " This lane round the corner is our best way "; and so he led the Ass deep into a dark and almost pathless forest, speaking to him all the while so glibly and courteously that Witless thought him the most charming Beast in the world.

Suddenly Reynardine stopped. " I had forgotten the recipes," he said. " Fool that I am ! But I need not trouble you, dear Witless. I gave them to a friend near here to keep safely, for Squire Careless's household is so irregular that I dared carry no valuables there. There is a short cut to my friend through the bushes. I do not think you, with your fine, big, handsome body, could

pass along it. But I am a thin little wretched creature, and it will not take me five minutes to go to the place and back. I shall be in your sight most of the way."

"Why, that is very thoughtful of you," said the silly Witless. "I will wait here for you. I shall be glad to rest, and I shall not stir from here, for I do not know a step of the way in this dark forest."

Reynardine thanked him for his patience, and ran off quickly. But if the Ass had waited till he came back, he would be waiting in the forest to this day. He stayed where he was till night came, ever and anon lifting up his hoarse voice and calling Reynardine: but Reynardine did not come. At nightfall Witless, weary and hungry and vexed, lay down to sleep; and the next day, knowing now that he had been tricked, he made his way painfully out of the forest. But it was many days before he reached home, and then he dared say nothing of what had happened, for fear of being laughed at for his simplicity.

Reynardine did not take long in getting back to his comfortable quarters at Squire Careless's. But the end was near. Squire Careless, soon after Reynardine returned, ran through all that was left of his money; his house was emptied and shut up. Reynardine was forced to seek a new home. But no one would take him in except Gripe the Miser; and he only harboured the Fox on condition that he brought him every day a fat hen, the bones of which were all the food Reynardine got.

It was a hard life for the Fox. But worse was to come. As he was out hunting one day for Miser Gripe, he suddenly came face to face with Quickscent the Lurcher.

The Lurcher was going to make no more mistakes. He sprang on Reynardine, and made him a prisoner in a trice. Then he drove him before him towards the Lion's

realms. Hardly a word was said by either: Reynardine knew that prayers and tricks would be useless now.

So they journeyed, till they were not far from the Court. Then a misfortune befell the Lurcher. The Tiger, walking in the greenwoods, met them. He remembered the rich reward offered to whoever caught the Fox.

"Lurcher," said he, "the Fox is my prisoner. You may go away."

"He is mine," answered the Lurcher angrily.

"G-r-r-r," said the Tiger. The Lurcher fled. "You are my prisoner," said the Tiger to Reynardine.

"I am honoured by being the prisoner of so great a noble," said Reynardine politely.

They walked on. "I know where there is a fat Sheep," said the Fox presently, in a smooth voice.

"G-r-r-r," growled the Tiger again. "I know where there is a Fox, with a great price on his head."

Reynardine did not answer. Presently he spoke again. "I know where there is a fat Pig," he said.

"G-r-r-r," said the Tiger: but he licked his lips.

Reynardine saw him licking his lips, but said no more just then. Presently he made another attempt. "I know where there is a Goat with five fat little Kids."

The Tiger did not growl this time. "Five, did you say?" he asked.

"Five," answered Reynardine.

"If you will show me the way to them, Reynardine," said the Tiger, "I will let you—— What is that?"

A trumpet sounded close at hand. A troop of Beasts came in sight, Firapel the young Panther, in a herald's dress, at their head, Quickscent by his side, and the King's guards with them.

"Sir Tiger, hold!" cried the Panther. Reynardine's

heart sank : he knew that all was over. "Yield me your prisoner, Reynardine the Fox, whom the Lurcher caught. The King commands it. The Lurcher has come into the King's presence, and told the truth."

The Tiger growled, and looked evilly at the herald. But he saw that the guards were too strong for him. With another growl he left Reynardine's side and bounded away into the forest.

They took Reynardine before the Lion, and read once more the charges against him, and all his tricks and falsehoods. "Let him be hanged here and now," proclaimed the Lion. "And be it known that henceforth all Foxes are for ever banished from our dominions."

Then and there they hanged Reynardine, and that was the end of the Fox's son. But as for the King's decree, no one heeded it, for to this day the Foxes go where they will.

THE END

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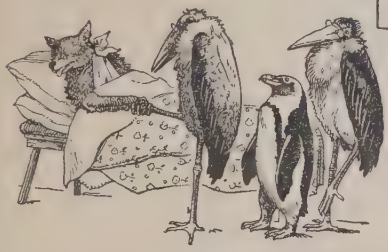

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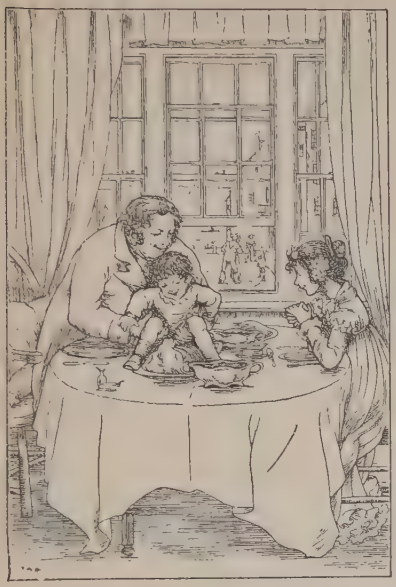

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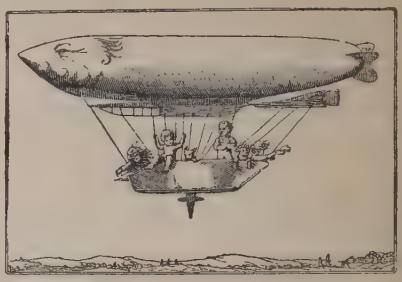

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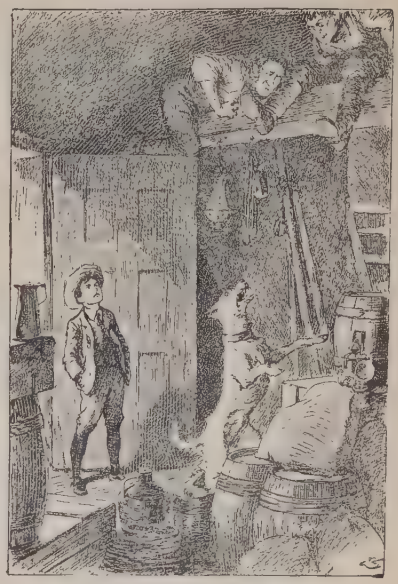

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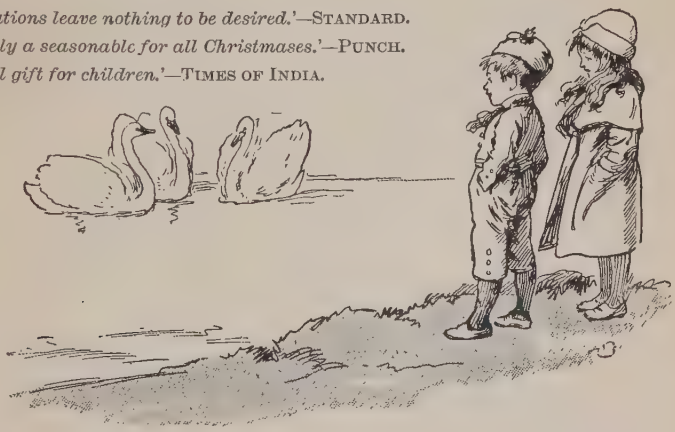

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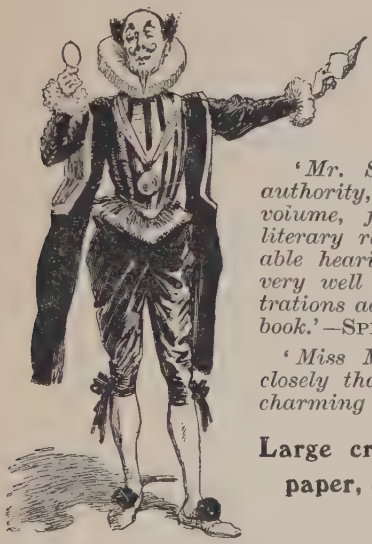

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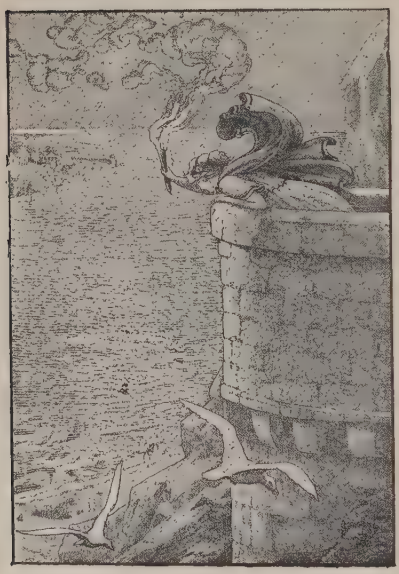

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